

CONSIDERATIONS

UPON

WIT AND MORALS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

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L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,  
PATER-NOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXXVIII.



CONSIDERATIONS

OF

WIT AND MORALS

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH



LONDON

PRINTED FOR G. B. J. AND J. B. J.

TATLER-STREET

IN DOCKING

P R E F A C E.

**L**A Rochefoucault, la Bruyere and Dunclos seem to have exhausted that part of morality which has for its object, Man living in Society, at Court, or in the Metropolis. But although the principle be invariable, man is seen in every age, in each reign under different appearances. The ideas which are most general in the world, the increase of riches and enjoyments, the progress of luxury, the severity or weakness of government, the force or annihilation of certain prejudices, the greater or lesser communication of the court with the city, all these circumstances produce considerable changes in the morals of a nation. There are distempers which totally disappear, whilst others arise to afflict humanity. It is the same with morals.



I despair of approaching the model of la Bruyere, which is the best reason for not following the plan he has traced; but, in renouncing admiration, let me be permitted to pretend to esteem. It is much better to describe characters, give maxims, and write detached thoughts, such as may call to our mind the excellencies of la Bruyere, than to methodically fatigue the reader in chapters of morality.

Literary productions are for the most part too voluminous. Authors are too commonly over-fond of definitions and divisions, and afterwards, in uniting the parts of their work, the cement fills up more space than the stones which compose the edifice. There are thoughts and maxims which may throw light upon a subject, and at the same time be too insignificant to be accompanied with the apparatus of a treatise. Detached thoughts, when they are well expressed, produce a greater effect, and are more easily retained than if they were confounded with the

the whole matter of a chapter. They awaken the attention of the reader, and spare both him and the author an useless multitude of words.

I have been copious or concise, and have written a chapter, given maxims, or delineated characters, according as matter occurred, or as by one means or the other I could more clearly express my thoughts.

In the characters I have traced I had no person in view, and I have carefully avoided drawing *portraits*. A character relates to a quality, vice or defect, which is meant to be described; a portrait assembles all the qualities, vices and defects of a person, their opposites and extent, with all the elements of which that person is constituted. A faithful portrait belongs to a person only, because there are not two persons in the world who have the same physiognomy and stature, whose qualities are in every degree similar, nor between whom they are equally divided. La Bruyere was less timid; he introduced into his  
cha-



characters notorious particulars of conduct, and thereby could not fail of indicating the persons. He went still farther; he spoke of the great events of the times, and of the most distinguished personages, without covering his recitals with the thinnest veil.

He thus expressed himself upon William, prince of Orange and king of England :

A man said, “ I will cross the sea, and  
 “ despoil my father of his patrimony; I  
 “ will drive him, his wife, and his heir  
 “ from his states. And as he had said so  
 “ he acted. What he had most to apprehend  
 “ was the resentment of several  
 “ kings whom he had outraged in the  
 “ person of one monarch; but they were  
 “ his friends, and almost said to him,  
 “ cross the sea, take your father’s property  
 “ and possess yourself of his place.”

La Bruyere drew portraits which bore no resemblance except to one man. Such is that of STRATON, whom he represents in situations so rare and conformable to those

those in which the duke de Lauzun was known to be, that at the time it could not be doubted but la Bruyere had in view this courtier who had experienced such a variety of fortune.

The author thus expresses himself:  
“ Straton was born under two planets,  
“ happy and unhappy; to the same de-  
“ gree his life is a romance: No! It wants  
“ probability. He has had no adven-  
“ tures. He has agreeable dreams, and  
“ some disagreeable ones. What do I  
“ say! Nobody dreams as he has lived.  
“ None ever drew more advantages from  
“ destiny than he has done. He is ac-  
“ quainted with mediocrity and extremes.  
“ He has made a great figure;—he has  
“ suffered.”—

In the character of the absent man there are many shades which have escaped the count de Brancas, in whom the model of la Bruyere was recognized by all his contemporaries.

I have



I have carefully avoided giving room for like applications ; and, from a most scrupulous circumspection, I have sacrificed several interesting details.

If a preface be useful, I am of opinion that it is so in a work of this kind ; when an author means to avoid imputations and make known his intentions. Such is my design. I will not speak either of the thoughts or style in which they are conveyed ; what signifies it to the public what rules an author has prescribed himself, or what are his ideas, adjusted according to his talents and manner of perceiving upon the true and beautiful. My intention is to please, instruct, and be interesting. The work is in the hands of the reader, and will plead better for or against the author than all his reasonings.

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## CONSIDERATIONS

UPON

## WIT AND MORALS.

**P**ERSONS who excel in society give brevets of Wit as honors are conferred at court, and the public is, to a certain degree, the dupe of these usurped reputations.

OF WIT.

**T**HE vague word Wit is the source of an infinity of errors. If, after the manner of the English, a less general expression were used, ideas would be more clear and precise. The English say a man has parts. The union of well propor-

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tioned

tioned features, joined to colouring, produces beauty ; but a figure may be pleasing by presenting some agreeable lineaments. A woman, without being handsome, may have some beautiful features.

This may be understood of Wit. An invention of terms would be necessary to describe its different parts. This word, as well as that of loving, has not a sufficiency of distinctive gradations.

A celebrated author pretends that the difference of Wit and Parts is produced by education alone. Such a system is scarcely worth refutation ; its falseness may be demonstrated without going into the obscurity of metaphysics. Facts and the slightest reflection are sufficient to prove that the man of genius owes every thing to nature. Were it otherwise all the students in an academy, of painting or sculpture, would become Rapaeles and Bouchardons.

The insufficiency of study and practice is apparent in the trifling progress made by

by a constant application to the games of chess and commerce, or to any other game which requires combination. The degree of perfection, at which all are to remain, is very soon attained, and beyond this neither attention, avidity, nor self-love, although daily excited, can possibly carry us.

I will endeavour to define Wit, that I may fix my ideas, and in some measure understand myself.

It appears to me, that Wit may be called the Knowledge of Causes, Relations and Effects. Profound Wit goes back to causes; that which is extended embraces relations and affinities, and refined Wit consists in immediate judging effects. The last kind is a special gift of discernment; it seems to belong particularly to women, for which reason, it perhaps is, that the Germans attribute to them something prophetic, or relative to divination.

Locke's definition of Wit is undoubtedly



superior to mine. "Wit," says he, "consists in distinguishing resemblances in objects which differ from each other, and judgment in distinguishing in what objects which resemble each other are different."

This distinction throws much light upon the nature of Wit, and upon that part of it called judgment, which is thereby well defined and established. But a more simple notion must be reverted to. Wit is the aptitude of thought, and thought itself. Every thing intellectual and physical is confined to two operations: conception and production. The man who thinks most, and is most inclined to thinking, possesses to the highest degree the gift of Wit. How many authors, rigorously examined according to this rule, would lose their reputation. There is more thought in single pages of Montaigne, de la Bruyere and Montesquieu than in a whole poem.

If several works were analyzed, leaving apart manner and colouring, and the attention were to be confined to what is profound and extends the sphere of the reader's

der's intelligence, we should be astonished at the mediocrity of the result.

Wit has been compared to the sight, by which the most just idea and the liveliest image is given of it. All its operations may be assimilated to those of the eye, which seems to be the material soul of the body. The properties of Wit and Sight, are the perception of objects, the distinction of their forms and difference, the judgment of their distance, and seeing clearly far and quickly. These relations have been found so just, that without reasoning upon their causes, the same expressions are used to determine the qualities of Wit and those of sight: sagacity, clearness, perspicuity, penetration, subtilty; obtuse, obscure, are words applied to one and the other. Eyes accustomed to certain objects discover in them shades which escape a more penetrating eye, not being in the same habitude. In this manner, the eye of a connoisseur in painting soon distinguishes a copy from an original; the man of letters, the man of wit, instantly discovers in a work all that

relates to the style and genius of a great writer. In the simple statement of a proposition, he quickly discovers distant consequences; in a principle seemingly unconnected, many applications; in a simple idea, something sublime; and, in a brilliant thought, falsehood and affectation,

If Wit be nothing but thought, if it consists in perceiving clearly, its degrees of elevation must be assigned; the distance of objects measured; the obscurity with which they are surrounded, and their complication determined before its qualities can be appreciated; and he who shall have penetrated the greatest obscurity, or clearly seen objects at the greatest distance, will be the man of superior Wit.

Who, according to this principle, can refuse to Newton, and the Chancellor Bacon who had discovered what Newton demonstrated, the first rank among men of superior understanding? The discovery of the laws of nature certainly required the greatest extent of genius, and manifested



feited the most sublime conceptions. The knowledge of man; the springs by which he acts; the means of directing him, and of subjecting his inclinations, ought to place the philosopher and the legislator immediately after. These are the Newtons of the moral world. In the same class will be found the historian, who assigns the causes of the revolutions of empires, the vices of their constitution, and who traces, in the ruins of antiquity, the progress of human intelligence. Poets form a class apart: some have talents only, others harmony joined to philosophy, sentiment and thought. Rousseau frequently devoid of thought and philosophy, Rousseau remarkable for nothing but harmony of style, and who seldom speaks to the heart, may be considered as a musician.

In following the same principle, and on examining the extent of the faculty of thinking, thoughts will be distinguished as they are profound or enlightening. The result will prove, that there is much difference in the merit to be attributed to moral or philosophical works. It seems,

however, that once ranged in a class, as upon the shelf of a library, one author is, to the generality of observers, equal to another. By frequently hearing Montaigne, La Bruyere, La Rochefoucault, and Duclos quoted together, we might be led to believe that their wit was upon a level. However ingenious Duclos may be in his definitions, or of whatever sagacity he may give proofs in the discovery of certain gradations, he is very unequal to Montaigne and La Bruyere. Duclos sees clearly, but not at a distance. He knows men, but they are those of Paris, of a certain circle, in the moment when he writes. He has frequently described a fugitive being. The horizon of his ideas is circumscribed. In another age or country Duclos's men will be unknown. This author will be like those painters whose pictures are sought after for no other reason than because they shew the modes and fashions of the age in which they are produced. He was, however, quoted twenty years ago with Montesquieu, Buffon and Jean Jacques Rousseau. The reason of his success is easily found:

found. His kind of wit, which was precision, justness, and sagacity, to a certain elevation of idea, gave him great advantages in conversation. It was of Duclos, of whom it was first said, *That he had his wit in ready money.* He seized with promptitude the objects most within the reach of the society of his time, and which were most interesting to it. This must have produced the greatest effect. The moment he wished to elevate himself he shewed the bounds of his talents. The painter of a few portraits fell beneath mediocrity when he attempted to paint history. Duclos described manners, ridicule, vices, and the false virtues of those with whom he lived, but he had never lived with Louis XI.

Wit is seldom discovered in the conversation of men of genius or great talents. As soon as they are out of their sphere, they appear not superior to others, and there is some difficulty in reconciling the contradiction between their works and their conversation. Men of eloquence  
must



must more particularly feel this disadvantage. A great theatre is necessary to animate them and call forth their talents. Wit is proportioned to the subject and circumstances, but talents require to be entirely developed. Without an established reputation, it is with difficulty a man can give attention when he reasons upon a subject. Nothing but a succession of brilliant thoughts has a great effect in conversation. Subtilties vanish, they are lost in the circle when the auditors are not previously prepared by the reputation of the speaker. The eloquent man must be excited—roused; the man of wit is always master of himself; his expressions fall every where with equal force, and, without being dazzling, illumine every object to which they are directed: those of a man of eloquence or talents are a torrent which overflows one part only; like the poet, he also must be in the humour. The man of wit always knows the measures he is to pursue; he combines, judges and expresses himself with truth, elegance, and agreeableness; the eloquent man is led away by the impulse

pulse of sudden inspiration, and frequently has no idea of the great effects he is going to produce,

#### OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE PASSIONS,

THE Passions, in heating the mind, give a soaring to Wit, which naturally it has not. This is another source of error to those who judge, because they cannot conceive the means, the wit and sentiment with which passions inspire the cool and sedate man, who, in that state, is not above mediocrity. The passions improved the person of le Kain\*. His ignoble stature and vulgar features were forgotten; he became elevated and ennobled: Le Kain disappeared, and his mind gave to his exterior the dignity and grandeur of a hero. It was on reflecting upon the creative power of the passions that a lady, to whom some of her friends expressed their surprise at

\* A celebrated actor.

the lover she had chosen, returned for answer: *has he ever loved you?*

A man, in whom a certain degree of wit is never discovered, except by the aid of stimulating passions, has not essentially that gift from nature.

It may, I believe, be established as a principle of judging, that a man of superior wit has no need of the passions to display it; that they are necessary to them of a secondary order, and that stupidity is applicable to him, from whom, even with these aids, no spark of wit was ever known to proceed.

There must, in the present age, be many errors in judgment upon Wit, because the language of men of sense, and that of the arts and sciences, is more generally acquired; consequently, it is more easy to deceive. Riches and magnificence are not represented by a gaudy dress, although it be illusive in the eyes of the vulgar.

At



At present it is easy to write upon most subjects. The instigation of knowledge, the innumerable writings, journals, commentaries upon great writers, extracts and critical dissertations, form a general dictionary of ideas, results and judgments, wherein every author finds an assortment, and the matter of a work, by mutilating, disuniting and mingling. Without Wit, a book may be produced upon administration or morality, and one who is not a poet may write verses, couplets or comedies. Every body, in matter of Wit, seems now to have the necessary, but few are thus blessed with opulence.

It is by the effect of this increase of knowledge that one author, without the least tinge of geometry, may write the eulogium of Newton or Descartes, and analyze their works; that another, quite ignorant of the military art, may compose that of Turenne or the Marshal Saxe, and in some measure appreciate their merit, and pronounce upon their faults.

In

In the age of Louis XIV. (the age of the greatest talents) Bernouilly alone would have written the eulogium of Descartes, Puifegur or Feuquieres that of a general. Bossuet and Fleschier celebrated Turenne and Condé; but they did nothing more than seize and trace the principal parts of their character; they spoke neither of their campaigns, nor talents as professional men. At present there is no difficulty in writing upon painting, architecture, and music, without having the first notions of these arts.

Talents depend, more than it is generally believed, upon circumstances, because these determine the degree to which they soar. Had Fenelon not been preceptor to the duke of Bourgoyne, he would not have composed a work of sentiment and imagination, and to this book only he owes his reputation. A ridiculous adventure furnished Piron with the rich and comic subject of *la Metromanie*; without this event he would have been in the class of middling authors. If Fontenelle had died  
at

at the age of forty, known by the Letters of the Chevalier d'Her, his eclogues or the reign of affectation, and his operas, he would not have been equal to Dorat. Determined to another essay, after having several times turned his attention towards objects proper for his genius, he became the luminary of the age in which he lived.

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#### OF TALENTS FOR PUBLIC BUSINESS.

A VERY moderate portion of Wit is sufficient to insure success in public affairs. The principal functions of men in place consist in deciding upon questions already a thousand times resolved. A certain activity necessary to a prompt execution; a facility in seizing details familiar by habitude; the text of a few regulations present to the mind; a knowledge of prescribed forms and customs, which have acquired the force of law, are all that are requisite. Knowledge and assistance are poured on  
from



from every quarter to a man in place, and the measure of them is in proportion to his elevation. Affairs are previously examined and discussed. They are not laid before him until they have in some measure been sifted, cleared, and put into such a point of view, that, unless he be stupid, the decision meets his eye. A man endowed with a middling understanding, and who has memory and application, may acquire a great reputation, especially if his physiognomy be sensible, or one which commands respect. Experience, moreover, teaches us, that for the most part success is more due to the character than the genius of the man in place. These are confounded, because to give an idea of merit, it is sufficient that the end proposed be attained. The extent of the means are also presumed upon from the importance of the object: Actors are judged by the theatre on which they represent. By a consequence of this manner of judging, we are disposed to refuse the qualities of the mind to him whom we find unequal to his situation and the character

character assigned him. When we think of the weak and indolent Gaston, we seldom recollect that he was a man of great wit and eloquence. But for the elevation of genius, the statesman must be distinguished from the man fit for business. In every age the first will always be a man superior and rarely met with. The sphere of his talents and genius is immense; that of the latter is narrow and circumscribed. One determines himself by the most profound meditations, and not unfrequently by instantaneous perception which borders upon inspiration; the other ever continues in a beaten track, and knows nothing but the positive; memory to him is more necessary than ideas. If a question of morality be put to a man of business he becomes disconcerted, having no guide, and wanders in darkness, or hides his incapacity under the appearance of disdain. Morality is, on the contrary, a source of knowledge to the statesman and politician, as well as to the philosopher.

It is upon the wit of men of the world

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that the most false judgments are formed. Some men are boasted of, and exalted in public, who, reduced to their just value, appear to be unworthy of the least consideration, even from the most common classes. Fatigued by extravagant or ill-founded praises, disgusted with certain persons, against whom it would be dangerous to declare openly, a man of sense feels an inclination to say to the winds, *He has the ears of an ass.*

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#### OF THE WIT OF MEN OF THE WORLD.

THE reputation of men of the world, who continually attempt Wit, is frequently equivocal. In the first place, every thing may be learned, and in every age there is a degree of ability, common to all, by means of a little application. Secondly, rank and fortune previously insure a great number of suffrages. The lord, the man of fortune, who have a taste for letters, have no rivals among their equals: these,  
on



on the contrary, are flattered by finding talents in their order; they are persuaded, that if they took pains most of them would be distinguished for their Wit, like those who are devoted to study and literature, and who make them their profession. Men of letters, on their part, see without envy, talents, of which they know the mediocrity. The verses of the most insignificant author, would be sufficient to establish the reputation of a man distinguished by his birth, employment, or fortune.

The present age is that of pretension and petty talents, because a man may compose himself a fund of Wit with the same facility as he does a library or cabinet of natural history.

It is the spirit of the age, and not that of the writer, which is found in several works.

A man of the world catches some light shades of society, he thinks he has matter

for a piece, and writes a comedy. His friends are in ecstasy at his fine penetration, and what is called the ton. All his merit consists in having employed the jargon of a certain class, and in having seized common occurrences within his reach, which are uninteresting except to a few persons, and wholly relate to particular circumstances. The art of these designs betrays mediocrity as much as it insures a momentary success. To enforce what I have just said, I will observe, that we see amateurs write comedies for private society, which, according to the splendor or mode of those of whom it is composed, have an ephemeral success; but none of these authors ascend to tragedy. A knowledge of the world, of the reigning ton, and of the intrigues of the day, all these passing shades, which are sensible to the eyes of every body, which may be caught by the most moderate writer, would be of no use in making heroes act and speak, nor in touching the heart, elevating the mind, and charming the ear.

Women

Women have still a greater facility in establishing themselves a reputation—they always preside, and are hearkened to with pleasure and attention. They can at will change the conversation or lead it to a subject familiar to them; perhaps to what they have read in the morning. Men, far from being jealous of their success, favour them to a high degree; they are disposed to discover delicate wit in their most simple expressions, and give them credit for the most superficial knowledge. If to this facility, which women have to excite attention, there be joined the empire of a supper, a name, riches, credit, beauty, a gossip may easily be ranked with a la Fayette and a Sevigny. Her reputation once established, who dare attack it. Society in general would rise up against the audacious being who should attempt to destroy an idol, perhaps already consecrated by a whole generation.

The fame of MONTESQUIEU and VOLTAIRE is particular to themselves: they created the wit of the age in which they lived.



lived. There are undoubtedly writers among the ancients whose wit and talents were equal to theirs, but none who in politics and morals made so astonishing a revolution, who had the same influence upon the minds and morals of every class of society. The sentiments and opinions of Montesquieu and Voltaire extend to all the objects which interest the thinking part of mankind.

In every work and conversation there is something either in the thoughts or manner of rendering them, which discovers the reading of these two great authors. The knowledge which they have spread contributes to people the world with half learned men, because they have rendered new and interesting ideas in such a manner as to be within the reach of a common capacity. Some think they take from their own stores that which they owe to the general mass of riches. A few maxims from Montesquieu are sufficient to compose a work upon governments; his thoughts are like gold, of which a little quantity serves to gild a great extent. Others

Others think themselves philosophers when they have mingled a few of Voltaire's ideas with their own, and have endeavoured to seize his manner and pursue the path he has opened.

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### OF CONVERSATION.

THE wit of conversation is another source of error; the number of admissible ideas is circumscribed; it is more exercised upon persons than upon things. Persons must be delicately treated, and reasonings upon a subject would be fatiguing. The man of the world must therefore create himself an art of speaking without saying any thing. Ton, manner, levity, insure his success; he is permitted to be ingenious but never profound. Imagination seems to be the kind of Wit which must best succeed in the world, because it multiplies the terms of expression whereby the same things are variously and more or less satirically rendered. A small

fund of ideas is sufficient to succeed in the world; it is necessary even that it should not be too considerable; the successes of the man of the world consist rather in what he has not than in that which he possesses. I have seen men whom I thought amiable or sensible because their company was sought after: I asked in what their merit consisted? They are sure in society, was the answer I received.—The walls are still more so.

A man who is quoted and caressed in society ought not to swell with presumption. Had he a greater portion of Wit, were he endowed with a strong imagination, and had a decided character, he would not be so well received.

This amiable man, who knows a few stories, which he looks upon as his patrimony, and who possesses the sole right of relating them;—who has a perfect knowledge of the manners and conventions of society, and delicately ridicules those who, from contempt or ignorance, neglect them—



them,—this man, who thinks himself superior to others, is insipid in a *tête à tête*, and reduced to an ignorant silence in the conversation of men of wit or information; for which reason he finds them tiresome pedants, and, according to the constant custom of fools, calls them metaphysicians.

Wit in conversation is merely relative, and when one man speaks favourably of another of the same society, it frequently happens that all to be inferred from it is, that the latter has more wit than the former.

Men of genius have seldom had an advantage in conversation before they have been announced as such: they produce no effect without being preceded by their reputation. They are then permitted to have the common circle of ideas because of the rarity, and that their hearers may say they understood them. The self-love of these is interested in giving to them, for some time, a favourable attention; but their

their conversation, were it daily, would be too strong a food for the mind.

Most of those, who in society are comprehended under the vague denomination of men of wit, have fewer rights than pretensions.

An amiable man in society, if it be of the first rank; he who has some talents for business; he who carefully preserves a few verses in his pocket-book, and artfully recites them to a well-disposed audience; he who has written one song in his life, or a little closet-piece, which is no more than the recital of some intrigue of society; he who understands English, and has been in England, who talks of gardens and greenward, who says *sit* instead of *situation*, and that a thing is forcibly pronounced instead of *expressed*, who employs the words *data* and *mass*, who says *un faire large* \* *ou mesquin*, who is the humble ser-

\* Those to whom the French language is familiar, will feel the satire conveyed by this expression, but it would be in vain to attempt a translation of it.

vant of a woman of consideration, the friend of a celebrated author, the lover of a female wit—he who gives dinners to men of letters, who knows by heart a few verses of a work not yet printed;—all these believe themselves to be men of wit, and gain the reputation of it if they have but the least access to society.

Nothing is more difficult than to judge of wit and talents. He who attempts it ought to be liberally endowed with both, and men of the greatest genius are not always they who judge the most infallibly. It is commonly said, that they have the talent of extracting wit from those who seem to have the least of it. This I take to be the reason. The more a man is elevated, and the fewer are his efforts to become so, the more he thinks it natural that others should be equal to himself. When a man of mediocrity repeats an axiom, a result which proceeds from memory only, the man of genius is inclined to believe that he has used the necessary means to discover that truth : incapable of  
appro-



appropriating to himself the ideas of others, he easily believes that all men think for themselves. Who then are they, from whose judgment lies no appeal? The public only, it will be answered. It is the many-headed monster; what escapes one meets the eyes of another; each examines a part, and the result from the opposition of opinions, forms a judgment not to be excepted against.

There is a tribunal, of which the judgments are more speedy, and at the same time as unexceptionable as that of the public—the tribunal of fools. They have a manner which approaches divination of discovering or rather feeling wit. The first homage which a man of superior understanding receives, is the hatred of fools: they hasten to pronounce a rigorous sentence against those, who by their wit and talents, are elevated above them. Their weak eyes discover light by the pain it gives them. Fools are sooner informed by their fears than others by their discernment.

Let

Let us, in this respect, admire that Providence which instinctively inclines men to put at a distance that which is offensive. The republic of fools, after the example of one of the ancients, always advises the heads of shrubs and flowers, which exceed the common height, to be cut off. Fools must triumph; they hold together; they form a corps, and have a language particular to themselves. "He is a dangerous, an extraordinary man; a man of systems; a metaphysician; a madman." These are the words consecrated by fools, to describe a man of superior understanding.

#### OF THE PROGRESS OF WIT.

IN reflecting upon the Progress of Wit and Knowledge, upon their general distribution, and upon the immense number of works of every kind, it seems that the time will

will come when it will be as impossible as it would be useless to possess wit and talents. The extent of thought will be like a vast country, the mass of which will be traced upon a great scale, and whose smallest parts will be known. Montaigne, la Rochefoucault, la Bruyere, Duclos, Richardson, and Voltaire, in his philosophical romances, have greatly advanced discoveries in morality. When philosophers shall have thrown more lights upon this subject, and when the smallest recesses of self-love shall be known—when all the seeming contradictions of man shall be explained, and dramatic authors shall have put into action, and exposed to view, that which is now in maxims—when the symptoms, the pantomime of the passions, shall be indicated and known, their accents noted, and their jests delineated; man thus exposed to the eyes of all will be like a clock without a case, in which the springs are exposed to view, and the movements followed by the eye.

Every thing will then be reduced to  
axioms



axioms and unvaried maxims; none will escape general penetration. The truth and falsehood of sentiment will be known by signs formerly imperceptible, and which exercised all the sagacity of the observer. A woman will know to a certainty if she be loved, and to what degree, by him who professes affection for her; there will appear infallible symptoms by which it will be discovered, if the attachment proceeds from an imagination exalted, or vanity flattered;—whether her lover follows the impulsion of his feelings only, or yields to a real passion.

Every kind of wit will be known; there will be thermometers to indicate and fix its degrees. It will be proved, that wit of a certain kind is incompatible with that of any other; what belongs to character and what to wit will be distinguished and assigned. By certain characteristics and manœuvres, it will be previously known that a man will become a great minister or a great general. Every physiognomy submitted to certain rules, and a prompt  
and

and certain judgment will no longer command unmerited respect.

At this epocha, no more books will be written; every mind will be fatiated. What works could authors compose? The field of politics and morals will be entirely cleared, and every thing comic or tragic exhausted and familiar to all the world.

It is to be imagined, that at this time of general knowledge and satiety, conversation will be very languishing. Every thought will be reduced to a proverb or a sentence; —there will be thoughts upon every subject, and education will probably consist in inculcating three or four volumes of proverbs. It will be so easy to compose verses, that the talent of writing them will be no longer a merit; they will be centos and hemistiches taken from every known work.—Will administration offer a great career to the mind? I think not. Its sphere is narrower than it is generally imagined; its principles are known, and morality only prevents the application of them;

them; the minister is embarrassed by an assemblage of contradictions; governments wish the people to be happy, and endeavour to simplify the system of imposts; the word beneficence is in every mouth; but ancient abuses, the delirium of war, the blindness of practice, will, for a long time to come, force such demands upon the people as they cannot with facility answer.

Let imposts be reduced to the level of the power of those on whom they fall, and from that moment the wisest end of the economical science will be attained. Destructive impositions will be suppressed, a proportionable tribute established, and commerce free and flourishing. Monarchs wish for a great commerce, yet they follow it through all its degrees to load it with shackles: this is like desiring a man to dance, and obliging him to do it in leaden shoes. In following the simple method I have just pointed out, which leaves nothing for the mind to employ itself upon, and requires no great combinations,



morals will be re-established, and luxury destroyed;—the people will be at their ease, and their capital no longer monstrously disproportioned—every thing will be in order.

When three or four bankruptcies shall have proved to nations the inconvenience of forced credit; when men, informed by experience, shall be able to foresee the epocha when it will be dangerous to lend, governments will be under the necessity of setting bounds to their expences, and war will become less frequent—a long peace will then give the enjoyment of that happiness which is found in apathy.

What resource therefore will be left to the human mind, agitated by its own energy, whereby it may manifest itself? Will it be found in eloquence? This is banished from monarchies, and figure, metaphor and great emotions will be indicated by rules. Education will accelerate this progress. When a judicious and sensible plan, appropriated to our manners, shall

shall be substituted to prevent forms, the sciences only will serve as aliment to the mind; but general inactivity will not permit a great application.

In this state of languor, wherein men will be led by the course of things, there will, perhaps, be no other resource, in ten or twelve generations, than that of a deluge to overwhelm all in a state of ignorance. Then a new race of men will begin to describe the same circle, upon which we, perhaps, are already farther advanced than we imagine.

The mind, like the body, extends, and fortifies itself, and is weakened or destroyed for want of aliment.

It is common enough to see persons who, in their youth, have had the reputation of men of wit, which they cannot support at the age of forty. The vivacity of early years, the ardour of the passions, the novelty of objects, the air of gaiety with which they are embellished, the taste

and fashion of the moment, all these in their youth gave a spring to their faculties. Whilst young men, they were interested and animated; they thought; they felt; but when they became familiarized to objects, and were no longer heated by the passions, the vivacity of their sentiments diminished; their mind, for want of exercise, became languid, and was confined to a very few thoughts and expressions. They lost all their merit in the first revolution of taste and fashion.

The passions have but a time. It is the habitude of reflection, the sciences, literature, or public business, which nourish and fortify the mind and prolong its duration.

Women experience this vicissitude in a more sensible manner. Their agreeableness of figure, and the desires of men create an illusion in female minds. The ravages of a few years act equally upon the charms of their mind and person. For the former, they have no other aliment, no other resource



source than the belles lettres, which, to a woman dissipated in her youth, are but feeble succours, or perhaps devotional intrigues, which are soon out of fashion; or those of public affairs, and these, in many respects, are beyond the reach of most women.

In proportion as a person possesses a greater fund of real property, he has less need of specie; so in proportion as he has a greater degree of conception, knowledge is less essential to him.

The mind which is not warmed by the soul, and elevated by its emotions, may be subtle and sagacious, but it never attains the elevation of genius. Like a weak flame, it spreads light without communicating warmth. It may serve to direct mankind, but alone it never gains them over by irresistible persuasion; the soul only can act on kindred souls \*. There

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are

\* The reader may, if he pleases, consult Mr. Locke and Lord Bacon. M. Meïllan seems to have read

are persons who obtain from the public a momentary reputation of wit, but to whom men of information refuse their suffrages. Others found a less brilliant one, but equally temporary, upon the opinion of connoisseurs.

Suppose a man to have a great false diamond ; it dazzles the multitude, who pay but little attention to a precious stone of a lesser size : lapidaries only can appreciate its value.

It is common enough to hear wit and good sense distinguished, and one boasted of at the expence of the other. Men of mediocrity excel in the art of discovering the faults of men of wit, and they have their reasons for giving every preference to what they call good sense. But

read them both. The mind, *mens*, a thinking intelligent being, is cultivated by logic and ethics ; see Mr. Locke. The soul, *anima*, according to philosophers, is a spiritual substance, which animates the bodies of living creatures ; see Lord Bacon. T.

do they understand what they say? This is doubtful. A vigorous courser, which impetuously springs into a great plain, and with a nimble leap clears the widest ditches, sometimes stumbles, whilst a horse not half so strong, with sure and easy steps, runs over a little space,

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#### OF GOOD SENSE.

GOOD Sense is a feeble light which illumines a confined horizon, and is sufficient to conduct him safely whose view is not extended beyond it.

When we are old, we shorten our days by tasting the pleasures of youth—this is the language of good sense.

“ Old age is a tyrant, which forbids,

D 4.

under



“ under pain of death, the pleasures of  
 “ youth—this the expression of wit \*.”

A man's having some knowledge of things, foreign to his profession, is frequently sufficient to gain him the reputation of a man of wit, and the degree of it is almost in proportion to his rank and fortune. It is thus that in academies a man of the world is received without much difficulty, and yet he makes one among men of both wit and talents.

ORONTE has all his life wished to have wit, and has spared neither care nor pains to obtain the reputation of it. From his youth he connected himself with encyclopedists and politicians, to be counted one among them, to support his reputation by theirs, and establish himself a wit in their retinue. A pension upon the Mercury becomes vacant, a place in the Academy is to be filled up. ORONTE intrigues and cabals in favour of some one;

\* La Rochefoucault.

all

all men of letters, and those who have pretensions to wit, are within his jurisdiction; his name must figure with every event interesting to literature. Assiduous in the rendezvous of wit, he presents strangers there, and makes his collection, that he may shine in other circles and display his parts to women. ORONTE has made three pilgrimages to Ferney, and shews flattering letters which he received from the Patriarch of literature. He understands Greek and Latin; speaks English, has travelled in England, and is in ecstasy when he talks of the verdure of British trees and meadows. He has attended at a course of lectures upon chymistry, anatomy, architecture, music, and painting.—Without being of the military profession, he speaks with assurance of war and tactics. What do I say?—He can write a work upon the sciences, upon political œconomy, which will contain what every body knows, and he only will believe he has written something new. ORONTE is the friend of the author in fashion; it is he to whom application is made to obtain a first reading.

His

His conversation is full of new expressions; and, according to the reigning ton, he is gay, susceptible, a teller of idle stories, the man of pleasantry, the politician or the philosopher; but all these without any thing natural, without animation, agreeableness, or depth of penetration. Thirty years have revolved in this painful occupation. What useless cares, ORONTE! I have never heard you spoken of as a man of wit.

One sonnet and a few madrigals were formerly sufficient to give reputation to a poet. At present the author of a dramatic piece, which has had some success, is scarcely spoken of.

Buffon says, “ It does not occur to us  
“ that the ass would in himself, and to  
“ our eyes, be the first, the finest, the  
“ best proportioned and most distinguished  
“ of all animals, if we had never seen a  
“ horse. Instead of his being the first,  
“ he is the second, and for this only rea-  
“ son



“son seems to be nothing. It is the comparison which degrades him\*.”

Many estimable authors of the present age enjoy but a middling reputation. They make a figure in libraries only, to add in some measure to the number, and are less read than consulted. The reason of the trifling effect which they produce, is the superiority of several writers who have estimated fame at too high a price.

The present century has produced men of the greatest genius of every kind. They have fixed the degree of elevation to which wit can rise, and every species of it which does not attain this, falls into obscurity. To produce a great effect—wit, sagacity, and erudition must now be added to the charms of style. The profound and enlightened Montesquieu, who treats of the most important objects, would not have acquired so great a reputation had not he joined to the interest of the subject, and

\* Buffon, tom. viii.

the profundity of his thoughts, the most poignant manner of expression.

Men of great genius have sometimes been the dupes of reputations, which, in their youth, they found established.

“ I have read,” says la Bruyere, “ Mal-herbe and Theophilus. They were both acquainted with nature; with this difference, that the first, in a full and uniform style, shews at the same time what is the finest, the most noble, the simplest and most natural of her works; he has given of them both the history and painting. The other, without choice or exactitude, in a free and unequal manner, sometimes charges his descriptions and dwells upon detail; he anatomises. At others, he dissembles or exaggerates; he passes over reality in nature, and makes it a romance.”

“ RONSARD and BALSAC have each in his kind good and bad enough to form upon

“ upon their model great men both in  
“ verse and prose.”

“ I know not,” continues he, “ if it will  
“ ever be possible to introduce into letters  
“ more wit, invention, agreeableness and  
“ style than we find in those of Balzac  
“ and Voiture.”

MALHERBE has preserved his reputation,  
but not because, as la Bruyere observes, he  
was acquainted with nature. The har-  
mony and justness of his expressions have  
preserved this poet to posterity. Theophi-  
lus is not read, and nothing is more op-  
posite to nature than the affectation of his  
thoughts and style.

The style of Balzac is noble and har-  
monious, but too frequently flighty and  
emphatical.

That of VOITURE is formal, and his  
thoughts are far fetched; the reputation  
he enjoyed, and which deceived la Bruyere,  
can only be attributed to the vicious taste  
of



of the age in which he lived, and the scarcity of distinguished writers.

Who can read without disgust the poetry of Saint Evremont? The rank and celebrity of the persons to whom his productions were addressed, undoubtedly contributed to his success. The progress in morals and politics has covered with obscurity his dissertations upon the Greeks and Romans. Saint Evremont had the wit of the times, which resembles that of society, and has but a momentary success. He had no talent for poetry, nor was his wit very extensive. He was amiable, cheerful, ingenious and gallant; the success of the man gave reputation to the author.

Many authors succeed in the theatre by happy situations, the pomp of show and novelty of subject, but are entirely uninteresting when read in the closet. Their verses are either rough or lingering, their thoughts common, and the illusion only of the stage can support their pieces in representation. They believe themselves  
to

to be classed with Corneille, Racine and Voltaire; whilst, with respect to talent, they bear no more relation to these celebrated men than does the scene shifter.

The very few authors who have the rare talent of writing, who join harmony of style to force of thought, always succeed upon the stage, although the œconomy of their pieces may be faulty. Harmony of style, added to thought and sentiment, charm the auditor more than situation, and conceal all the defects of the piece. The first merit of every writer is to interest the reader. How few authors of tragedy have this great advantage!

The wit of the sixteenth century consisted in erudition. It seems that genius strove to arrive at the point of maturity. Wit succeeded erudition. Great talents were afterwards manifested, and their lustre continued almost a century. The state of languor, which is the consequence of great efforts, seems to characterize the present epocha. Men of genius are replaced by  
literati;

literati; they reason upon works of the preceding century, range them in classes, and write upon the art of writing. Many authors are capable of giving lessons, yet there are but few who can present models. The principles of taste are familiar, and the habitude of judging has quickened general discernment. There are more enlightened judges, more well informed readers, and fewer men of talents. Whilst a man is young, his mind is productive, but when the senses feel the impression of age, he is confined to reasoning upon the past. Such are the stages of life, and such seems to have been the progress of three centuries. This century presents the image of old age. Impotence, admiration of the past, self-love, which is the effect of age, and the insensibility of a heart no longer susceptible of impression, and, finally, an attachment to money, seem to give the sexagenary character of the times.



## OF THE COURT.

THERE is a country of which the exterior seems gay and animated, where an agreeable and sonorous language is spoken, but which frequently expresses what is contrary to the thought, or expresses nothing. Its inhabitants all appear to be employed, and have frequently nothing to do. They run until they are out of breath, that they may have no longer to wait. Many go to this country to return from it, speak of it, and impose upon others; wit and genius are there unnecessary and even dangerous. Habitude and an instinct, which is directed by vanity and interest, are sufficient to the adventurer to conduct himself ably. Patience and assiduity are absolutely necessary, and frequently supply the deficiency of every other quality. The mind is never disturbed by ill humour, and disgust and marks of disdain slide gently over the soul without leaving the

E. But upon the least

least visible impression. One man alone, the universal center around which all move, attracts general regard. He walks, and every body is in motion ; he stops, and all are immoveable ; he is melancholy, and the air of affliction becomes general ; he laughs, and every face beams with cheerfulness. This man is worshipped like a divinity, and tastes not the pleasures common to mankind. He is a stranger to truth and friendship. He can form no idea of his own merit by the free suffrages of those who surround him. These have greatness of soul, morals, vices or virtues according to his pleasure. This country must not be lost sight of ; a few months absence constitutes you a stranger. The part to be acted there changes every instant ; the protector and protected are found in the same person ; he receives vain promises, and gives others as vain in the same quarter of an hour. It seems that no body dies in this country, for every one is instantly forgotten and replaced without an appearance of the least change. It is the abode of hope and envy. Whilst tormented  
by

by one you are consoled by the other, which fills your imagination with agreeable chimeras. Death overtakes the inhabitants in the midst of hopes, which, for twenty years, have been continually deceived in the pursuit of projects whose execution would require another life. Those who are unacquainted with the country I speak of believe it to be paradise; the inhabitants decry it, yet have not sufficient resolution to detach themselves from its regions.

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## OF KINGS.

KINGS have no friends, the reason is, they have no need of them. Affection and attachment appear in the air, attitude and anxiety of every one about their person. Of what use to them would be friends? To tell them the truth? Men speak it not to their equals; how would they dare shew



it to him from whom they have every thing to hope and fear?

Kings in general are reserved. This is because vanity, the principal cause of indiscretion, can have no empire over them. Suppress the desire of being hearkened to, of appearing well informed, and discretion will become a common quality.

Kings, it is said, dissemble, and preserve a countenance undisturbed in the midst of agitations. The true reason of this power over themselves is, that their self-love is never affected, that they are accustomed to assume a visage of courtly representation, and finally, that their fortune is ever assured: a battle lost may give them pain, but does not interest their personal fortune, and they easily find people who prove to them that the advantages gained by the enemy are not considerable. They dissemble without art. By the nature of things, they have little to express, and consequently little to conceal.

Seneca

Seneca says, that a virtuous man struggling with adversity is a sight worthy of the Divinity. Another spectacle, not less sublime, is a virtuous king combating the seductions which are studiously multiplied around him ; shutting his ears against the voice of flattery, and incessantly dissipating the obscurity with which truth is continually enveloped.

Kings had formerly more communication with their subjects. The frequency of troubles, and the power and ambition of the great, forced sovereigns to confer familiarly with prelates, warriors, and magistrates, and to manage and caress such as had most credit with the people. It was necessary they should assure themselves of the fidelity, courage and attachment of those whom they employed, and whom others might gain over to their party. Engaged by these motives to study men, to know and manage them, kings lived in familiarity with their subjects. The result was confidence and affection on the part of monarchs, by which great fortunes,

the effects of an intimate communication with the sovereign, became more common. Hence, favourites and ministers, at whose riches, magnificence and authority we are now so much astonished.

The power of sovereigns rests at present upon an immoveable basis. Numerous armies oppose interior troubles as well as sudden invasions. There are but few opportunities of displaying rare virtues, of exciting the acknowledgments of sovereigns by distinguished services, or of manifesting great talents, because the sphere of public affairs is confined. By the same reasons, there are few circumstances by which a great ascendancy may be acquired over Princes; in the moment of need they have to choose, from a considerable number of men, those of middling talents, which are sufficient to the greatest employs. The familiarity of sovereigns is not determined by any necessity; they find in all those about their persons fidelity without merit, because the former is never exposed to a dangerous proof.

Let



Let me be permitted to compare little things with great, that I may explain my idea more clearly. A young man who has mistresses, and frequent calls for money, feels the necessity of putting confidence in his valets. In the want he is of discreet and active agents, he attaches himself to those of his servants, in whose prudence and fidelity he can best confide. The man without passions and intrigue is unacquainted with the capacity and talents of his domestics; he needs not give them his confidence. Of what use are qualities or talents in giving a glass of wine or standing behind a carriage? It is the same with those who approach sovereigns, when the state is calm and royal authority well established.

Posterity, like societies, seems to have its infatuation. There are men who have given the greatest splendor to the age in which they lived, whose merits are depreciated according to the opinion of the succeeding age, and the systems which writers, who have an influence upon pub-

lic judgment, form to themselves. The name of Henry IV. seemed for some time to be eclipsed by that of Louis XIV. who had intoxicated the court and the nation with his great qualities, and impressed all Europe with admiration and fear. The poem of the *Henriade* recalled public attention to Henry IV. Afterwards, the application of the mind to objects of political œconomy, confined general observation in a more particular manner to the administration of Sully and the reign of his master. The ideas of fame and grandeur appeared to be dangerous chimeras, pursued at the expence of blood and the property of the people. The pure and simple views of Sully excited admiration, filled the mind with enthusiasm, and produced a genial warmth in the heart. Every thing achieved or projected by the minister was considered as an honor done to the sovereign. The people were eager to overturn the statues of Richelieu, who had prepared the reign of Louis XIV. This monarch, so admired whilst living, who seemed to have made hoarse the voice of fame, has been  
blamed

blamed and depreciated by public opinion; his ministers have lost much of the reputation they had acquired. Louvois, in the eyes of most people, was but a tyrant; Colbert, a laborious minister, whose views were false, and who by multiplied regulations and prohibitory laws retarded the progress of agriculture and commerce, and suppressed the efforts of industry. In the calm of observation, I will endeavour to compare Henry IV. and Louis XIV. and this parallel will, perhaps, present to the impartial man some distinguishing actions in favour of Louis XIV. How many are there among those who now blame this monarch, who, in his life-time, would have been carried away by admiration, and have made the academies resound with his praises. When we mean to appreciate great men, we must consider all the circumstances by which they were affected, the reigning sentiments of their time, the seducements which surrounded them, and the force of subsisting prejudices, which appear so easy to be conquered when time has worn them out.

Henry



Henry IV. hardened to fatigue by his education, passed, at an early age, the ordeal of adversity. He felt himself obliged to be a great man, or reduced, in some measure, to a state of servitude. The title of king of Navarre must not deceive us: this vain title did not prevent his being in the absolute dependance of the king of France. Henry's court was poor: he was the chief of a party rather than a monarch. Perpetually obliged to combat and negotiate, love was the only relaxation he enjoyed from the fatigues of war and the agitation of political intrigue. The dangerous allurements of this passion went more than once near to leading him astray, and hindering him from turning to advantage the most precious instants. He had wit and vivacity, was not a stranger to literature, and the habitude of negotiations had given him a profound political knowledge. The heart of Henry was susceptible at the same time that his active senses burned with desire. He was the more sensible of friendship as extreme embarrassments and critical situations had taught him all its value, and

and made him feel the necessity of confidence. Henry had seen the miseries of the people, and this afflicting scene was still present to his imagination after the immense elevation of the throne had placed him at a distance from it. Habituated to familiarity by the vicissitudes of an agitated life, obliged when upon the throne even to manage the great and powerful, and inclined by his nature to confidence, he tempered the splendor of royalty with the sweets and amusement of private life. By his simplicity and manner of living, he approached all the classes of citizens, with which, before his elevation, he had had more or less communication, and by this means inspired his people with a sentiment of tenderness to which they had long been strangers. He was, like other men, a father, husband and friend; and, in the midst of a brilliant court, the interior of his household resembled that of a private family. These relations with humanity seemed to confound the rank of the monarch with that of his subjects, and rendered him more dear to those of whom he seemingly

seemingly became the equal. He had weaknesses ; and, in times of disorder, they presented the greatest dangers. He wished to associate his mistress to the throne, without being restrained by the perspective of the inevitable troubles which the illegitimate birth of his children would one day excite. Carried away by the ardour of his desires, he made a promise of marriage to another woman. A faithful, enlightened and laborious minister, the companion of his military toils, restored his finances to the greatest order, penetrated the intricate labyrinth of the operations of partizans, boldly combated the avidity of the great, and made the first efficacious effort to relieve the people from the oppression under which they had so long laboured.—His master was twenty times upon the point of disgracing him. Biron, who had partaken with him of all the dangers of war, became guilty of a crime against the state ; but this crime was so badly concerted, that no great danger was to be feared from it. Henry appeared inclined to pardon him, but required an avowal. What availed it, whether



ther his friend, led astray by a frantic ambition, made an avowal or not? Ought a state crime to be treated with all the vain punctilio of a quarrel between a lover and his mistress? Ought the king to have made the life of Biron depend upon an unnecessary avowal which was so difficult to this haughty subject?—When years began to accumulate upon his head, Henry was again surprized by love. At the age of fifty-eight he became passionately fond of the princess of Condé. The husband, with just reason for jealousy, quitted the kingdom, and the monarch, in despair, sent to every court in Europe manifestos against a prince of his blood who had attempted to protect his wife from the dishonour the king had prepared her.

The austere Sully, the grave Jeannin, and Villeroy, grown gay in the political service of his country; met to confer upon the means of giving the princess of Condé to his arms. Europe was threatened with the ravages of a war for this new Helen. A frightful and tragical death was the fate of  
Henry,

Henry, and this terrible event awakened tenderness in every heart, and left a long and painful remembrance of his loss. He lived not to be old, nor lingered upon a bed of sickness; he died at once in full possession of all his faculties, and the nation was sensibly affected by his death, and grateful for all the good which it was supposed he would have done.

Such was HENRY IV. a consummate general and a valiant soldier. He was frequently led away by weaknesses which often proceeded from the sensibility of his heart, yet they obscured the majesty of the throne. A private man in his own court, sensible, cheerful and gay, full of goodness and humanity \*, he could not satisfy his envious and insatiable courtiers, but he answered in some measure the expectations of his people, and seemed, had his life been spared, as if he would have surpassed them.

\* *Bonhomie* in the text, which in some degree corresponds with the English expression, *the milk of human kindness*. T.

LOUIS XIV. was born upon the throne. On opening his eyes, he saw men prostrate before his grandeur, and the word majesty, mixed with gentle lessons, very soon met his ears. Under the vain appearance of a preceptor, the flattery of a courtier, anxious to prepare himself for future credit, was artfully introduced. His education was neglected, and perhaps purposely retarded. His character and justness of discernment were early predicted. He resembled a vigorous tree planted in a bad soil, and whose roots were not watered, but grew up and branched out by means of its vivifying sap. He had neither those fallies nor witticisms which mark the levity of a superficial mind, and which flattering preceptors embellish at will, and strive who shall repeat most. Wisdom and discretion marked his early years. Habitue, familiarity, and the marks of tenderness, which escaped Mlle. Mancini during a dangerous illness with which he was afflicted, disposed his heart to love. He was soon passionately enamoured of the niece of his minister, of a cardinal mayor of the palace. Respect  
for



for his mother, and the consideration of the distance between him and his mistress, gave him sufficient courage to surmount his passion. Burning with the love of glory, and capable of business and continued application, he was enslaved by the acknowledgments he thought he owed to a minister who had governed the helm of state in the midst of storms;—to the man who had enjoyed all the confidence of his mother—to whom he was attached by a spiritual tie \*, and who was at the head of his education. He left him in possession of the sovereign power, and was content in privately studying mankind and the great art of reigning. At the death of the minister, Louis manifested his abilities, applied himself to state affairs, was equal to every detail, and conceived the greatest projects. His confidence was divided between two men whom nature seemed to have formed to govern kingdoms. Neither the indefatigable spirit of intrigue, the rivalry of talents, nor the jealousy of power could

\* Cardinal Mazarine was god-father to Louis XIV.  
incline

incline the balance in favour of either of them. The monarch seemed to resemble the Divinity, who contains the elements within the bounds prescribed.

Louis engaged in war; the necessity of the enterprize was, perhaps, exaggerated in his opinion by his love of glory. But his kingdom overflowed with riches, his generals were men of distinguished abilities, and he found himself possessed of a degree of power which, for a long time, had been uncommon. Finally, surrounded by flatterers, by young courtiers, who breathed nothing but war, and the great wits of the age, who predicted his conquests, and, previous to them, compared him to Alexander—In the age of the most ardent passions, fired with the desire of acquiring a great name,—of shewing his valour,—and possessing the means of universal enterprize, who would not, like him, have undertaken every thing?

Let us hear what were the sentiments and principles of this monarch, as he de-

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clared

clared them to two persons who enjoyed his esteem\*.

“ I have always thought that the first  
“ quality of a king was firmness, and  
“ that he ought never to let his virtue be  
“ shaken either by censure or praise ; that  
“ in order to well govern his dominions,  
“ the happiness of his people was as the  
“ polestar, on which he ought to fix his  
“ attention, regardless of tempests or con-  
“ trary winds which might continually  
“ agitate his political bark.

“ I use every effort to procure myself  
“ friends as well as servants, and although  
“ I confess I have been deceived in my  
“ choice of some, my heart will ever be  
“ disposed to friendship and beneficence,  
“ which are the only pleasures I leave in  
“ the world.

\* These passages are taken from a conversation of Louis XIV. before Lisle. Pellisson made the third person.

The



“ The love of glory is certainly the  
“ reigning passion of my mind ; and as  
“ that which we acquire by our valour is  
“ undoubtedly the most estimable, it is  
“ that by which I feel myself most flat-  
“ tered.

“ Since I perceive you will receive plea-  
“ sure in hearing me speak of my own  
“ heart, I will, for the love I bear you,  
“ make that effort, however repugnant it  
“ may be to my feelings to speak of my-  
“ self.

“ It is true, I have ever felt pain on  
“ hearing myself praised, as having all  
“ the virtues of a great king, and parti-  
“ cularly when I have been conscious of  
“ not possessing that for which I was  
“ most flattered.

“ The titles of conqueror and hero,  
“ which are indiscriminately given to kings  
“ whether they have ever done any thing  
“ to merit them or not, were offensive to  
“ my courage ; and my heart, which is  
“ really

“ really just and generous, could not suffer  
“ another to make it a compliment of  
“ the fame of which it felt itself worthy.  
“

“ Nevertheless, as there is something  
“ great in subduing the passions when it  
“ is in our power to satisfy them, and  
“ that no monarch but one devoid of religion and love for his subjects, can  
“ undertake a war solely to satisfy his  
“ ambition, I wished to wait until justice  
“ put arms into my hands.

“ In other things which I have done  
“ this campaign, and wherein I followed  
“ as much the advice of M. de Turenne as  
“ the dictates of my own judgment, I  
“ thought his abilities, supported by my  
“ presence, were sufficient to insure success;  
“ I therefore more particularly applied myself to learn under him the art  
“ of war, and to give proofs of courage,  
“ than to the conducting of my plans.

“ All the difficulties I have had to encounter  
“

“ counter have only served to render my  
“ courage less capable of being shaken ;  
“ but being generally known to my army,  
“ I was afraid least they should intimidate  
“ the soldiers by the idea of so great a  
“ danger : and perceiving that the taking  
“ of Lille consisted in gaining from the  
“ beginning some advantages over the  
“ enemies, and in preventing an infinite  
“ multitude of burgeses from being in-  
“ ured to war by the most trifling advan-  
“ tage over us, I thought nothing but  
“ my example, my officers and nobility,  
“ could inspire my army with an ex-  
“ traordinary valour capable of astonish-  
“ ing the enemy.

“ To this effect, I was desirous that my  
“ presence should animate all their actions ;  
“ and that none might escape my obser-  
“ vation, I passed every night at the *bi-*  
“ *vouac* \*, at the head of my squadrons,  
“ and most days at the end of my trench,

\* An extraordinary watch kept at night for the security of a camp. T.



“ that if the enemies attacked my lines,  
“ or made a *sortie*, I might fall upon them  
“ with my whole attendance.

“ It is true that yesterday being with  
“ the rest at the line of circumvallation,  
“ when the enemies were about to make  
“ a third sally, and having seen two of  
“ my squadrons quit their station to go  
“ and charge them, I thought it unfit-  
“ ting that I should desire extraordinary  
“ marks of your courage without giving  
“ you some proofs of my own, on an oc-  
“ casion wherein my reputation was so  
“ materially concerned. There is no  
“ king, be his pretensions to goodness of  
“ heart ever so few, who can see so many  
“ brave men sacrifice their lives in his  
“ service without taking some part in the  
“ common danger. I was therefore highly  
“ satisfied that your courage and affection  
“ justified my zeal and ardour, and happy  
“ to command you in a battle which I  
“ thought would become considerable, that  
“ I might partake with you of the honour  
“ and

“ and have such good witnesses of my  
“ valour.

“ I know that detraction spares not  
“ kings more than other men, and al-  
“ though the shafts of malice be more  
“ secretly directed against sovereigns; their  
“ effects are not less generally felt when  
“ they are waded off by the marks of  
“ royalty.

“ When a king contents himself with  
“ continually hearing his own praises, and  
“ when his heart is not more delicate than  
“ his ears, it frequently happens that his  
“ own opinion is the only one which is  
“ favourable to him.”

Several of these expressions, but little known or quoted, manifest the character and manner of thinking of this great monarch. I will now finish what I have to observe relative to his reign and person.

He encouraged all the arts, and learned foreigners were naturalized by his benefi-

cence. His campaigns were triumphs, and the most magnificent presents were the recompence of the least marks of friendship in princes who sent ambassadors to compliment him. Every mind was filled with extravagant joy, and the name of Louis resounded throughout Europe; his fame reached the distant regions of Persia and the Indies; there was but one great king, the French monarch. The majestic gracefulness of his person, the nobleness of his manners, his conversation, which was always adapted to those to whom he spoke, and often sensible and pleasing; his sumptuous entertainments, and the magnificence of his palace, invited every body to his court, where wit, taste and politeness exclusively reigned\*.

Louis

\* Father Rapin wrote to the Comte de Buffly in 1671—"It must be a consolation for you, that it is not at present the fashion at court to have wit and virtue." This father Rapin was very scrupulous; without considering the great talents of every kind which gave lustre to the reign of Louis XIV. and confining myself to the persons of his court, under what



Louis XIV. in the brilliant entertainments which he gave to the nation, was himself an actor, and permitted pleasantries and allusions relative to his taste; these would at present appear dangerous indiscretions.—They seemed not at the time to correspond with the haughtiness of his character, with that majesty with which he took pleasure in surrounding himself.

In the royal ballet of Hercules in love, represented in 1662, the following verses were written for mademoiselle de Mancini representing a star,

what reign, in what court could he have found more wit? Whom could he have opposed to the great Condé, to the duke of Rochefoucault, to madame de Sevigny, to madame de Coulanges, to Henrietta of England, the duke of Nevers, the duke of St. Aignan, the compte of Grammont, the marquis of Vardes, the compte de Guiche—to madame de la Fayette, the cardinal de Retz, madame de Thianges, the abbess de Fontevrault, to madame de Montespan, to Pelisson or Benferade.

“ Ce

- “ Ce goût trop délicat  
 “ A votre feu si vif et si rempli d'éclat,  
 “ Mêlé quelque fumée et sert comme d'obstacle.  
 “ Les étoiles vos Sœurs vous diront qu'autre fois  
 “ Une étoile a suffi pour produire un miracle,  
 “ Et pour faire bien voir du pays à des Rois.

Which may be rendered nearly as follows :

This taste too delicate,  
 With your ardent and brilliant fire,  
 Mixes some smoak, and serves as an obstacle to its  
 effects.

The stars, your sisters, will tell you, that formerly  
 A star was sufficient to produce a miracle,  
 And make kings see many countries.

The pretension which Mlle. Mancini had  
 of marrying Louis XIV. who had loved  
 her to such a degree as to make the  
 queen afraid of her, could not be better  
 announced.

In the ballet of the Birth of Venus,  
 wherein the king danced in the character  
 of a shepherd, his partiality for Mlle. de  
 la Valliere is expressed in the following  
 verses. But what is perhaps more extraor-  
 dinary,

dinary, the disgrace of the superintendant Fouquet is there attributed to the audacious propositions which he made to the lady.

For Mlle. de la Valliere, shepherdess.

“ Ne pensez pas que je veuille en ce jour

“ Vous cajoller, ni vous parler d’amour.

“ Je fais qu’il est dangereux de le faire

“ Et je craindrois plus que votre colere.”

Think not I mean at present to cajole you, or speak of love; I know it would be dangerous to do, and I should fear something more than your anger.

Louis was susceptible of love, and the choice of his mistresses did honour to his taste. They were the *delicate* la Valliere, *humble as the violet, ashamed of being a dutches, a mother and mistress*. Montepan, who was superior to most women in beauty and elegance of person, in gracefulness of manners, the liveliness of her mind, and that ingenious turn of wit which was the appendage of Mortemart.—The beautiful  
and



an virtuous Maintenon, whose mind was of so superior an order. When his passions were calmed by age, he made her his companion, without dividing with her his throne. It was the society of an estimable woman which he wished to insure to himself, and not that of an ambitious one, like Gabrielle d'Estrées, who pretended to the crown. No inconvenience could result from this alliance; the age of madame de Maintenon prevented her from giving hers to the throne, which was already well supported and protected on every side.

Although Louis had the fullest confidence in his ministers, they never governed him, nor did he, on his part, ever subject them to unjust caprice. Ardently as he loved, he was never dishonoured by the object of his choice, nor by the empire which love gave over him. He was great in weakness ever, and was never carried beyond the bounds of decency. Full of his own greatness, and desirous that nothing should resist him, yet never was he cruel.—Abandoned to voluptuous-

voluptuousness, yet never overcome by effeminacy. He had a friendship for Lauzun, la Rochefoucault and Villeroy, but was never led by favourites. He was habituated to excessive praise, yet patient in hearing truth.—He knew how to give lustre to every body near him, and for a long time inspired his court and people with a religious love for his person. Holding an equal balance between different events, he encouraged talents and the arts without favouring any body, (a rule unobserved by Richelieu) or desiring that his own taste should be the reigning one of the age. Louis was born a monarch, and his amours, conversation and actions never suffered him to withdraw himself from public attention. He had but little in him of the private man; but majesty, grandeur, and frequently goodness, were conspicuous in all his actions.

Common and natural pleasures are necessary to kings. Self-love enters into all those of other men, but that of kings is satiated from their infancy.

Sovereigns

Sovereigns and the great, suffer none but gay and agreeable objects near their persons, and their repugnance on seeing the unfortunate is frequently mistaken for goodness, whilst their feelings are personal, and incline them to avoid the sight of that which is disagreeable.

The affliction of the great is often nothing more than anger.

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#### OF COURTS AND COURTIER.

CUSTOMS and jargon change in every court, but flattery will ever be the determining principle of fortune, and the fear of talents and virtue an obstacle to the advancement of men of superior merit.

If flattery ceased to have the greatest influence in a court, it might be concluded that government had lost some of its power,



power, that the sovereign, the ministers, and the great had less influence upon the imagination, and that the bonds of dependence were weakened. The vices and virtues of a government are so united, that it is impaired by a diminution of the defects which result from its constitution.

Courtiers are not the most enlightened men in a nation, and yet they are those who decide the most quickly upon merit. From the habitude of judging, and their interest being strongly excited, they derive a superior nicety of discrimination which seldom leads them into error; the clearness of their perception is extreme, and, from things apparently indifferent, they draw the most important conclusions. The jest, countenance, and every thing by which a man may be discovered, falls under their observation; this is not rational but instinctive, and on that account more just.

A man in the city enjoys a great reputation, to which men of wit even give their suffrage.

suffrage. He arrives at court, and there fills an important place. A courtier at first sight discovers his defects and incapacity, and the celebrated man disappears for ever.

Courtiers resemble children, who perceive with such quickness and subtilty the defects which escape the observation of persons of more experience.

Why is the deceit of courtiers so much complained of? It is only necessary to learn their language and become acquainted with their manners. There is no more perfidy in a court than in a cloyster, or in a family whose interests are divided; but it is concealed under less vulgar appearances. To mistake the forms of politeness for real sentiments, is the grossest ignorance. Women say, an opera is frightful: Is such an expression to be literally construed? A man says, to his equal, to his inferior even, that he is at his service: Are we to conclude from this, that he is ready to obey him. The polite exterior of the court  
has

has at least the merit of concealing its interior deformity.

Men at court seek after power and grandeur, and are drawn towards him who is invested with these attributes. It is self-love which leads to error in the ardent pursuit of objects; it exaggerates their value to the imagination, and contributes more to deceive than the artifices of others.

The garden of the Thuilleries is unfrequented in winter. In the same manner courtiers abandon men in disgrace. Could the trees, in this garden, make any reasonable complaint against those who sought not their shade when covered with hoar frost?

At court there are but two sorts of persons who produce great effect—princes and ministers. Men make way for the former, but run to meet the latter. Greatness produces respect; it is excited by power.

G

There



There is no place at court except for the great and the little. Men of middling rank cannot exist there. Eminent merit may sometimes shew itself—but as a phænomenon and transient as a comet.

People at court have not more wit than others, but they are they who know best how to do without it. They are accustomed from infancy to see objects of a certain height, to measure the different degrees of society, and to range men in classes. Regards and attention form a part of their education, and exercise them in this custom. They have a certain facility of expression which is engaging, and different manners of rendering the same thing. Hence it comes that their company is more agreeable than that of a man of private society, who, although he may have the advantage in understanding, sees with the prejudices of his situation, and expresses himself with less delicacy.

Renown can find no place in a court. Courtiers can suffer no advantages which  
are

are out of the power of favour to confer.

These men are really great philosophers. No body appreciates human weakness better than they do, nor is better acquainted with littleness of mind. The success of their flattery is the best proof of this assertion.

Men who think themselves ambitious are frequently full of nothing but the littlenesses of vanity. The exhibition of the anti-chamber is sufficient for most of them. The man really ambitious wishes to agitate and govern the world.

The most flattering dominion is that over mens minds. What is the influence of a minister compared with that of the head of a sect?

Self-love finds its enjoyment in the suffrages and approbation of men; but the last degree of pride is to enjoy their contempt.

Egotism reigns particularly in discourse; personality has more influence upon actions. The Egotist continually boasts of himself, and for the most part speaks in the first person. The personal man artfully seeks that which may but serve his interests and flatter his self-love: the former often speaks of himself, and the latter strives to turn every thing to his personal advantage.

#### CHARACTER OF A PERSONAL WOMAN.

CHEPHISA is wholly taken up with herself: every part of her conversation points to this only centre. She sometimes appears to depart from it, but insensibly returns, and as she is mistress of some address, it requires penetration to follow her through all her windings. Her sole and continued desire is to produce effect in trifling



trifling as well as important occurrences. She must at all events engage every body's attention. Chephisa has very good eyes, but a strong light incommodes them, and on entering an apartment, she desires the curtains may be drawn. A high chair is necessary to her, and the houses where she visits are provided with this particular piece of furniture. She carries bread with her, and the water she drinks is poured out of a case bottle : it is perhaps Seine water ; her chair, her bread and water, are not those common to every body. Her servant is a *beiduc*, a hussar, or a negro ; she will be distinguished—the conversation is always led by Chephisa. She speaks to every body apart ; and if a man in place, or a minister, be in the company, she takes care to get hold of him. She leads him aside, and never fails to find a subject upon which she speaks to him in a low tone of voice. Chephisa suffers with impatience the praises of others ; every eulogium she hears seems to be a theft committed upon herself, and when she speaks in favour of any person, it is not so much to do jus-

tice to merit as that her discernment may be admired. If she speaks of a fine action, it is to shew her sensibility and engage attention. If she be warm in her commendations, it is that they may the sooner be ended. Her birth, her husband, children and taste are the eternal topics of her conversation. Speak of China, and with much address you will be brought back into her closet, to her lap dog, or to something which relates to herself. You cannot escape, you must think of Chephisa. There is not any body she really loves; her husband, children, and all those who seem dear to her she considers no more than as so many possessions and dependances. She has no taste for arts; for any thing which imitates nature, nor for nature herself; none of these speak to her of her own person. All her attachments are formed upon motives of personal ability. She seems to love Doris, because he is convenient to her at a supper once a week at her house; Criton, because he dangles after her in a public walk; Dorimon, because he is a man *a la mode*, and figures at  
the

the suppers she gives ; Artemenes, because he has a great place, and his friendship gives consideration ; Damon, because he knows a few stories, which when she pleases, she makes him relate, and has him continually at her command ; Calisthenes, because he is a prince, and his company does her honour—he is like a lustre suspended in the middle of her drawing room. Finally, all those who know and visit Chephisa, have each their part to act, or some office to fill, either for her amusement or interest. She has no sentiment, and would be glad the universe were a mirror wherein her person might be incessantly reflected.



## OF POLITENESS.

THE politeness of old men of fashion, is boasted of in every reign and century, and young men are reproached with a want of good breeding. This is neither the fault of the present age nor generation, but of youth in general. Men of riper years, or advanced in life, are less carried away by their passions and inclinations. Experience has proved to them the necessity of regards and attentions; more accustomed to constraint, and more attached to their interest, their attention is so marked as not to wound self-love, and they are anxious to obtain universal suffrage. The courtier of fifty years of age, whose politeness is quoted as an example, was blamed in his youth for a levity of manners, his airs of contempt, and his ignorance or forgetfulness of polite attention.

Extreme

Extreme vivacity or indolence prevents a man from being polite. Persons of a very lively disposition, are led away by their ardor, and are frequently wanting in attention to others; the idle are really so from an unwillingness to give themselves trouble.

Men are always the dupes of politeness, and of those expressions which have the least value; their self-love is disposed to turn every thing indiscriminately to their own advantage.

Several persons assembled produce a disagreeable odour; if obliged to live together, they agree to use strong perfumes. This is a part of politeness.

OF THE PRINCIPLES OF MONTESQUIEU  
UPON GOVERNMENTS.

IT is in vain that several authors have exclaimed against the principles of Montesquieu upon Governments. The more they are reflected upon the greater knowledge and depth of penetration they are found to contain.

Fear, and the absence of the sentiment of honour, particularly characterize despotic states. In China, the emperor orders the bastinado to be given to a minister or a mandarin \* ; and afterwards these persons continue in their employments without thinking themselves dishonoured or degraded. They are scholars which re-

\* A name given to the magistrates and governors of provinces in China, who are chosen out of the most learned men, and whose government is always at a great distance from the place of their birth. T.



turn to their places after having been whipped.

VOLTAIRE has criticised the principles of three governments established in l'Esprit des Loix.

“Virtue,” says he, “is in every country the fruit of education and character; it is said in l'Esprit des Loix that more virtues are necessary in a republic. In one sense the contrary is the case; more virtue is necessary in a court to resist so many seductions.” He afterwards quotes the duke of Montauzier.

It is evident that Voltaire did not understand the principle of Montesquieu, and that he has confounded the possible existence of virtue in a monarchy, with the virtue which, according to Montesquieu, forms the essence of a republic. Virtue has more difficulties to conquer, and the virtuous man more merit in a monarchy, by reason that virtue is not there the determining principle, and that much  
force

force is necessary to combat the general disposition. Voltaire understood the word virtue in its ordinary acceptance, and did not consider it in its relation to a republican government. Virtue, in this sense, is the love of public weal.

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#### OF REPUBLICS AND MONARCHIES.

THE history of a republic is most interesting to read, but a monarchy is preferable to live in; every thing is quiet there and proceeds without agitation. Such is the harmony of celestial bodies, in which the impulsion of movement is unfelt.

A republican government seems to be proper for the beginning of manhood when movement and agitation please more than tranquillity. A monarchical government is  
fit

fit for men of riper years, who give the preference to peace and repose.

A well composed monarchy is the constitution which approaches nearest perfection: it is a middle state between republican convulsion and the sinking of humanity under despotism.

The most estimable principle which can be established in a monarchy is the love of fame and honour; and, on the other hand, the love of these is a principle of conception, because it attaches a greater consideration to the opinion of others than to the real goodness of actions.

In monarchies, the fear of pains, and the desire of rewards, are sufficient to form faithful subjects.

In republics, it is necessary to be attached to the public welfare.

There is scarcely any point of elevation in monarchies of which those who are successful



successful dare make known the means ; in republics preferment is openly obtained.

In monarchies the man in place is frequently enervated by the necessity of managing certain persons ; in republics he gathers strength by oppositions and obstacles, as a gladiator by combats.

In republics men succeed by the qualities they possess ; in monarchies, not unfrequently, by those of which they are devoid.

In monarchies, characters lose their energy by imitation ; in republics, they are often carried to extremes by an unbounded liberty of action.

In republics, men are sacrificed to public good ; in monarchies, this is sometimes sacrificed to men.

Revolutions in monarchies may be sudden ;

den; in republics, they are the effect of long agitation.

In monarchies, the symptoms of evil are hid from public view. Stupefaction shuts the eyes of a weak government, and it may be upon the brink of ruin without so much as suspecting danger; in republics, every thing is open to discovery, every thing is foreseen.

In republics, the militia is really a national force, and enjoys more consideration than a regular army; in monarchies, regular troops have the first consideration, and the militia falls among the last class of the people.

In republics, a career is open to talents, and these governments have in them vigour and principles of execution which determine success. Men early succeed to great employments, because, in the general movement, every thing gives way to force.

In

In republics, every one finds an opening and exercise for his faculties; in monarchies, a man who has energy has frequently no other resource than pleasure.

In monarchies, the fear of ridicule has an influence over the mind and produces a fashionable servitude, which is weakening and corruptive; there is more taste in conversation and writings, more politeness in manners; in republics, there is more originality, more candour in conversation and simplicity in manners.

In republics, dependance is more upon the laws than upon persons, the security in which the subject feels himself renders particular attention to certain persons useless;—there is more equality among the citizens and greater liberty of mind. For all these reasons, politeness, which is but an imitation of the social virtues, must be less common in this kind of government.

In



In courts there is an almost infinite gradation of ranks and persons. From class to class they act upon one another, and an unknown, yet decisive power, may be found in the lowest order. From this necessity of attention to every body comes politeness. Hence that fear of offending, which keeps the mind continually on its guard;—that perpetual desire to place which disposes men to make advances, to flatter and caress. Politeness in courts is a characteristic and an indispensable quality. It is the supplement of virtues which a man does not possess.

The language of a republican country must necessarily be energetic; that of a monarchy, full of turns of expression which weaken the real meaning of things.

Friendship reigns in republics; men there strive to class themselves; they have great interests to take care of, which require fidelity and secrecy; they love the same thing in common, and friendship is

H

created

created as well as fortified by the spirit of party.

In republics, society is naturally more general, and assemblies are more numerous; the same interest animates every mind, and the liberty of thinking is greater; in monarchies, there are more particular and circumscribed societies; the interest of each of these, as well as that of individuals, is more attended to than the interest of the community at large, and fidelity and discretion are useless.

In a republic, the more the essential springs of the constitution are bent, and the greater the movement and agitation, the nearer the government is to its perfection.

In a monarchy, on the contrary, nothing must be carried to an extreme; every thing must be balanced in an equal movement. The force of opposition must have a limited degree of extension, and authority

rity a moderated action. An equilibrium is the most perfect state of a monarchy.

The idea of virtue is become so effaced that scarcely do we hear the name of it pronounced. The usual expression now is, an honest man, which contains but negative qualities; or sometimes qualities are mentioned, such as bravery, fidelity, &c. but a collective word which expresses them all is seldom made use of; in republics, enumerations are unnecessary. The love of public weal comprehends every thing—it is virtue itself.

Amiability is, every thing considered, the safest and most advantageous quality to carry into society. It is too dangerous to let any thing appear which characterizes the great man.

In monarchies, the great art of obtaining a high employment frequently consists in stifling impatience.

In republics, faults ought to be personal,



and not reflect upon families, because every one is equally subject to the laws.

In monarchies, the desire of distinctions essential to this constitution, makes it honourable to be above the laws, and punishments seem to prove nothing more than that the family upon any part of which they are inflicted, enjoys but little consideration. This manner of judging and being effected, appears in some measure to render crimes and punishments common to a whole family, which they seem to reduce to the lowest class.

If a man of mediocrity, who is in place, has considerable interest, he proposes persons and determines the choice of them. In this case, most public employments are held for the next twenty-five years by men of mediocrity.

In republics, there is in some measure a competition for great employments; in monarchies,

monarchies, they are arbitrarily distributed.

In the first of these governments men of superior abilities are necessarily called up to great places; in others, they are frequently preferred, for no other reason than that their superiority has not been discovered, or that their talents have been seconded by intrigue.

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### OF WAR.

IN time of peace, men of slender abilities make a great figure. Minute attention to the discipline of troops, and application to petty details, are the only means whereby a man can distinguish himself; and persons of middling talents, joined to activity, are, above all others, most likely to succeed in this way.

War is one of the scourges of humanity, and yet it is by war that nations preserve their virtues and the character which is particular to them. Man is naturally and strongly disposed to motion. It is by action that his qualities are developed, and by which he compares himself with others, and is well or ill in his own estimation. One nation preserves and strengthens its attachment to its manners and constitution by its quarrels with another nation, its rival in power and commerce.

A long peace familiarizes people to each other. Commerce pulls down every barrier and gives a politeness to manners which reduces every one to the same level. National character is weakened, the idea of glory forgotten, and virtue becomes feeble ; for public virtue is the love of public weal. A native is not then more dear than a stranger : every man is measured by the advantages arising from a commercial intercourse with him.

Virtuous



Virtuous times, with different nations, have ever been the times of war; and the epochas when their antipathies were such as the greatest desire of each was to destroy the other. The obstinate hatred of the Romans against the Carthaginians; that of the French, at certain periods, against the Spaniards, leave no doubt of the degree of patriotifm which was its cause and effect.

Commerce reconciles nations; they all, in the end, become enlightened by the sciences; and the mental communication these establish between men tends to destroy national prejudices. Commercial and thinking men have the universe for their country.

In this state of things, there are naturally fewer great virtues, but these are less necessary. The energy of every polished and enlightened nation becomes equally diminished. It then seems unnecessary that the citizen should be animated by a noble patriotic enthusiasm: all that is required of him is morals and social virtues,

by which the place of public virtue is supplied.

Great virtues exist in little states only; they are incompatible with riches, and metals constantly become the portion of states which aggrandize themselves.

If war with natural enemies produces virtues, civil wars give birth to them in greater number, and require more rare qualities. In the former, valour and military talents are sufficient to obtain success; but, in time of civil dissension, the valour which braves danger must be added to the intrepidity which braves punishments; to talents for war must be joined the wisdom and experience of a statesman.

The superiority of past generations over the present was, in a great measure, the effect of their perpetual agitation. It is to this cause that the virtues of Henry de Guise, of the admiral de Coligny

Coligny and those of de l'Hopital are to be attributed : Henry IV. was formed by like circumstances. In profound peace, his ardent desire of pleasures would have enervated his mind, and he would not have been either so great or good a king, had he not been roused to activity by war and public affairs—had not he himself felt the pressure of want, or had not the feelings of his heart been a thousand times awakened by the cries of the misery of his people.



## OF VANITY AND SELF-LOVE.

IN the number of extravagant ideas, with which the heads of madmen are filled, it seldom happens that they have one which inclines them to believe they are in a subordinate state. Visit all the mad-houses and you will find the insane inhabitants either princes, kings, emperors, or gods. If they be enamoured, it is with a princess or a queen. In general they speak of nothing but grandeur; a sensible proof that vanity, above every thing, reigns in the human mind.

There are two things which comic poets in their descriptions, and moralists in their characters, can never exaggerate; these are vanity and avarice.

Vanity governs mankind, and for this reason the great enjoy a distinguished advantage, that of flattering their inferiors  
by

by admitting them to their presence and familiarity. The artist, the physician and surgeon, as well paid by a commoner, fly in preference, in obedience to their commands; they are pleased in approaching persons whom chance has placed so far above them, and in seeing what passes in their circles, that they may speak of it to their family and friends; and this access adds to their emoluments.

A great man who has not his inferiors at command, has but a shallow capacity, considering their inclination to admire men in elevated stations, and the impression which their most trifling expressions make upon them.

Self-love is the source of pride and vanity; but I am of opinion that it is possible to distinguish these affections; they have the same principle and yet are differently modified. Self-love is flattered by homage; the want of this has less effect upon pride, but vanity publishes it to all the world.

Much

Much has been said of the pride and vanity of the comte de Buffon, and all that has been quoted from him is perhaps not so striking as the following passage from one of his letters.

He there speaks of his memoirs, and thus expresses himself :

“ The work is a great one, and whole  
“ years of consideration will scarcely be  
“ sufficient to examine it well.” These  
famous memoirs are very moderate performances and entirely uninteresting.

Too much self-love is a great weakness, and at the same time deceitful to a high degree ; a man, who has it to excess, depends upon every body about him.

We are insusceptible of virtue, unless there be something we value more than life.

The man who can be made to tremble, he who is easily corrupted, are despised, because



because the bounds of their virtue and courage are known as well as the motives which make them obedient and dependant.

The extreme love of life disturbs the faculties to such a degree as to destroy the means of preserving it. Extreme self-love disconcerts a man so as to prevent him from profiting by the advantages which he possesses, and may in the end reduce a man of wit to the state of a fool.

Self-love inspires us with the desire of mixing with the world, and of living with persons of an elevated rank. Again, it withdraws us from the great world that we may not be eclipsed by superiority. It makes us prefer societies in which we are sure to hold the first rank or at least to be distinguished.

CRITON avoids the world, he is in some measure savage, he is pleased and satisfied with the society of a few friends, but numerous circles are insupportable to him;  
he

he there appears awkward and embarrassed, and seems to have lost the use of his senses. From this it may perhaps be concluded, that Criton is timid and difficult in the choice of his society; but the self-love of Criton is extreme, and he has the most violent inclination to produce effect. For this reason only it is that he avoids assemblies, in which he would not be distinguished, and that he is not happy except in small circles where he excites and engages attention. In these, confidence gives the necessary scope to his wit.

Vanity is not confined to the honours of this world, it pretends to extend them to another life\*.

\* Mademoiselle de Montpensier relates, in her Memoirs, that madame hurt herself, and was delivered of a daughter which had been dead ten or twelve days, and was almost rotten; she adds, that madame de Thianges, told the vicar, who was uncertain whether the child was in a state to be baptized or not, to look to himself, that baptism was never refused to children of that quality.

It

It is not always most flattered by the real advantages of a great place ; a little prerogative or frivolous distinction is frequently most valuable in the eyes of vanity ; men dare not publicly avow the consideration they attach to these, and even within themselves, it is with difficulty they reflect upon it.

Let us analyze the effects resulting from the possession of a great place, of an important employment, or of the blue, red, green, or yellow ribbon, the desired objects of many men who pass their lives in hopes and fears. Let him who possesses them examine himself ; let him be honest and he will say, Men approach me with an humble and respectful air ; in passing the crowd I see them make way, and the people and valets hastily take off their hats in my presence ; when I enter a circle, reverences are more inclined for me than for others, and I am listened to with attention ; the ladies smile upon me, and are solicitous to speak to me in private. I am spoken of in the gazettes and journals, and  
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my name is from time to time read in them by the idlers of Petersburg and Vienna. My antichamber is filled with persons, whom the desire of fortune, or the pressure of necessity, keeps in my dependance; their number and solicitations assure me of my influence. Subalterns, and my servants, call me *Monseigneur*. A man would sooner confess a bad action than avow the extreme consideration he has for these vain distinctions, which he seemingly despises. But I refer to those by whom they are enjoyed, and their attentive observers.

The desire of producing sensible effects, and of gaining attention, pursues men in the most trifling circumstances of life; he who gives a dinner is the centre of those who are at his table; his guests are obliged to pay him attention, and the pleasure of being most distinguished is what he seeks after in assembling them. Few people have reason and philosophy enough patiently to hear it said, that their cook is but an indifferent one, that their wine is not excellent, or that a regoût is  
not



not good; self-love makes us interested in behalf of every person and thing in our possession or dependance.

What powerful attraction does Dorfan find in the employment he holds? It consists, you will say, in his natural inclination for detail and public affairs. No. The considerable salary attached to it? Little less. He is himself ignorant of the motive which makes it so precious to him:—I will tell you what it is. The connection which his employment gives him, and the forced auditors who are obliged to listen to every thing he says. Dorfan relates, expatiates and wearies, BY THE KING'S AUTHORITY.

It is by reason of our self-love that we support with pain the slightest pleasantry, and, on the contrary, that certain persons suffer themselves to be its devoted objects. It is absolutely necessary, to their satisfaction, that they should engage the attention of others, and they prefer being the objects of raillery than to being  
I con-

confounded with the insignificant and unknown.

Few people recite a conversation with a king or a great minister in the same tone of voice and manner of expression in which it passed. They change something without a purpose or any previous arrangement. They substitute expressions apparently equivalent, and the jest, and tone of voice in which they relate what passed gives another meaning to the whole. All these reserves and alterations are ever in favour of self-love which watches within us, and acts in some measure without our participation, so sudden and enlightened is its inspiration.

One man has need of restraint, another of encouragement. Hence it comes that the same man is known under different aspects, and that he succeeds in one society and is insupportable in another. Each of these men appear to advantage when circumstances are such as to encourage or restrain him.

A general

A general rule is, that he in whom vanity is predominant has no sentiment for excellency and truth, and is incapable of affection.

Curiosity and indiscretion are inseparable companions, and falsehood is the child of vanity.

Man, in a natural state, knows not the wants of self-love. As soon as he lives in society, he feels the desire of being distinguished and attended to by others. To be unknown is a torment to him, and he loses the sentiment of real enjoyments to create himself the pleasures of self-love and vanity. Less concerned about being happy than to appear so, he purchases places, performs the duties of office, and makes himself connections that he may act upon others and others upon himself. If by dignities he cannot excite attention, he strives to produce effect by a display of his riches, the magnificence of his house, the taste and costliness of



the furniture which it contains, and by the new divisions of his gardens. It is not for his own pleasure that a rich man gives great suppers, that another assembles half the town at his balls, or has pictures by eminent masters, or a closet of natural history ; it is to add to his consequence. This house, these gardens, form for the proprietor a situation in the world ; he possesses them as he would perform the functions of a place at court, or those of a great employment in the city.

CHARACTER

CHARACTER OF A MAN WHO POSSESSES A  
FINE HOUSE.

THE house of Arfura cost him half his fortune, and must be allowed to be a pretty shop, almost equal to the *little Dunkirk*\*. Every thing is placed with symmetry and exposed to view so as to have effect. Three volumes, which are upon a bureau, are changed from time to time, but always figure in the same place; the paper and standish are immovable. What admirable order! In examining so agreeable an habitation, I am afraid of deranging something, and the master of the house undoubtedly feels the same embarrassment. Where does he keep himself? In some distant corner? For I perceive no traces of motion, nothing which proves the house to be inhabited. The boards are so slippery that it is difficult

\* A famous shop in Paris.

to stand upon them. Arfura is not often at home, and his wife and darling son have no habitation there. Ah! I know the reason: he is afraid of incommoding the public. This is a great self-denial. But what pleasure does he receive when at court or in the city—he is sent to for tickets of admission. He goes to give a look at his house and gardens to see if every thing be in its place; but his pleasures are sometimes disturbed. He was one day informed that a great lady had been to see his house, and that the moss which covered a part of the ruins, so expensive to keep in order, was washed away by the rain. He was told the workmen had left their tools in his antique temple, and that the river was almost dry from the negligence of the waterman. Redouble your cares, Arfura, if you wish to preserve your consequence. Watch your house-keeper that you may assure yourself she is careful to shew every thing to the best advantage, and to direct the attention of the curious to that which is the most singular.



gular. One neglect is sufficient to ruin you with the public. The young girls whom you pay to figure in different attitudes at the end of the meadow are sometimes absent. Above all, take care that the old man, his wife and children, whose employment is to feign a rustic family in a thatched cabin, fail not to be at their post at the arrival of a brilliant company. Never sell your house, Arfura, however expensive it may be to you ; you would in that case be a minister out of place. You smile, Arfura, in seeing children make baby-houses. Your occupations are not different from theirs, and are still more vain. These employ themselves for amusement, and you to be talked of.

Irremediable inconvenience, which mortifies self-love, is the most afflicting.

That which makes others withdraw themselves from our society, is the most disagreeable to be reproached with. A man may pardon the greatest injury, but

will he forgive another who reproaches him with being tiresome?

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### OF BIRTH.

IF a man of an ancient family, although but little known, makes a brilliant and rapid fortune, all his natural and acquired advantages become so many motives of the greatest envy. His birth is criticised and depreciated, and, for a century, the public, perhaps, refuse to do justice to his ancestors\*.

\* Birth is more than ever necessary in France, but as ancientness alone is sufficient to enjoy all the advantages to be expected from it, a high and illustrious birth was never more indifferent. When a man can date his nobility from 1400, when he can prove that he descends from a long succession of lords of manors, he thinks himself equal to the Rieux, the Montmorencies, the Rohans, &c. &c.

The

The first care of those who become rich is to forge a genealogy; this proves with what impatience men bear being ranked in an inferior class, and excluded from certain honours. The more fortune is considerable the more this exclusion is sensible.

The wisest and most enlightened men have not always been exempt from the pride of birth. Turenne had this weakness to the last degree.

The prejudice of birth is one of those the most predominant in the minds of men of every class and country. The casts of the Indians do not associate with their inferiors, and there are several grooms to nabobs who would think themselves dishonoured by eating with their masters. Raymond, who sells cloth, and whom you look upon with the same consideration as you do the draper whose shop is next to his, has quite another opinion of himself. His father was member of a certain company, and you cannot imagine the difference there



there is between him and his neighbour.

There are three advantages which, when they are in the highest degree, give the greatest consideration: elevated rank, superior understanding (acknowledged to be such) and an immense fortune. Grandeur, fame, and power, have nearly the same effects. Voltaire, and the possessor of a million, are distinguished beings in society: no consideration is refused them. It is in vain that men who have amassed immense treasures are laughed at behind their backs, or that the baseness of their origin is treated contumeliously; ministers have need of such persons to disengage the state from its embarrassments; and, the great, to re-establish their affairs. They command respect from the most haughty lord, when he recollects that their signature can procure him an agreeable existence, or relieve him from pressing exigencies.

A man of mean or obscure birth thinks  
not

not of being respected on account of his origin, which is known to every body ; but let one of his best friends, to save him from ridicule, be obliged to speak to him upon the subject and he will not know how to treat it with sufficient delicacy.

Men sometimes boast of the obscurity of their birth to increase the merit by which they removed this obstacle ; but they never avow mediocrity, because they flatter themselves this may create illusion.

The advantage of high birth chiefly consists in making merit less necessary.

The most modest person in appearance, upon the nobility of his family, and who seems to attach to it the least consideration, artfully conceals the pride with which it inspires him. Ten years intimacy with him are scarcely sufficient to discover it ; but sooner or later the moment arrives when he, who seemed satisfied

fied with equality, reclaims all his rights and awakens his vanity.

Nobility, accompanied by misery, is a ticket in the state lottery. Circumstances fall out so as to elevate a man who has this advantage to the highest employments, to which, without it, he could never have pretended. Mediocrity even in this case is infinitely valuable.

He who continually boasts of his birth and importunes others with it, persuades them in the end to give it more consideration than it deserves. Many ancient and illustrious families, but not more so than a hundred others, owe all the opinion of their splendor, and of their superiority over other families, to the ridiculous vanity of one of their chiefs.

He who consents to devote himself to thirty years ridicule, sometimes procures real advantages to his posterity.

Argentès



Argentes is born a commoner : his father becomes a gentleman the first of his name. Argentes calls himself marquis, and is laughed at in the world. He persists in spite of raillery : ten years pass, and people become accustomed to his title. He must be called marquis under pain of quarrelling with him, and because people are familiarized to hearing the title added to his name. Argentes marries a woman of quality without fortune ; he becomes the relation of people who despise him, but with whom he signs a contract of marriage, and it is not necessary to ask if he goes regularly to family assemblies. In vain does his wife despise him, her escutcheon is united to his : this is sufficient ; he makes one more step in the career of vanity, and puts his name upon the door. Pleasantries are renewed, and he patiently suffers them. Finally, the public are accustomed to the hotel of Argentes, because in fact his name is written upon it. He dies, and his son has quiet possession of the title of marquis and of the inscription upon the house. A generation is past,  
the

the ridicule is forgotten, and all the world knows of the matter is, that the name is not ancient.

A modest man, who has four more generations of nobility, dares not take a title; he has a porter only, his liveries are of an obscure colour, and his servants humbly say, *to the house* \*. He appears as a common citizen, whilst others owe to their impudence alone their being classed in a more advantageous manner.

There is frequently much injustice about birth. People of the court know no medium. They call a man who has two hundred years of nobility, a commoner, because his ancestors held no great em-

\* Alluding to footmen in Paris, who, on opening the coach-door for their mistresses, have received her orders where to conduct her, and who in giving them to the coachman, if the lady has desired to be driven home, say, *à l'hôtel*, which sometimes means a magnificent mansion, at others, a second or third story in a lodging-house.

ployment,

ployment, or they filled honourable places in the magistracy.

For four hundred years has the family of Adramont uninterruptedly inhabited a little castle, and his ancestors have married the daughters of lords of manors; none of them ever rose above the rank of captain, none ever figured in history, or distinguished himself either in the church or in a political career, and their names, known in the neighbourhood of the castle, are unknown to the rest of the kingdom. Adramont continually boasts of the antiquity of his family, and speaks with satisfaction of the recent origin of houses become illustrious by great services and the highest dignities. He says, *a man of my rank, a man like me*; and meaning the most bitter reproach to a man whose ancestors have filled the first places in the law; know, says Adramont to him, that no LORD CHANCELLOR was ever in my family.

In some measure, none but men of  
middling



middling rank are capable of being dishonoured. Obscure names, when they become famous by crimes or scandal, call nothing to recollection but the event which covered them with shame. They are like trees which are judged of by the only fruit they have born. Illustrious names, on the contrary, cover by their splendor, or hide by their renown, the crimes and scandalous faults which appear so many unfortunate exceptions in a family known by great services, eminent dignities, and distinguished employments. It is thus on reflection that a principle of reason is found in the blindest prejudices.

## OF CHARACTER.

THE qualities of which character is composed, are like colours which are entirely changed by mixture. The mixture and the result require the most subtle penetration.

To know well the character of a man, it is necessary not only to be acquainted with his inclinations, his qualities and defects; but to fix their different degrees. By these means, his conduct, in a given circumstance, may be assigned almost with certainty.

Aristes is choleric, proud, voluptuous, self-interested, exceptionous and idle. His good qualities, his defects and sentiments, according to their different degrees of force, will govern him on different occasions. Think him not incoherent if he neglects his interest: his heart is more  
K susceptible

susceptible than his mind is interested. If sensibility does not incline him to relieve the distressed, who may have moved his compassion, be not surpris'd at it : the consequences of his actions must be public, and moreover, he is more idle than compassionate.

Ergastes has business to transact : he concludes it speedily, and makes sacrifices which he might have avoided. He purchases something considerable, and pays the first price he was asked for it. Ergastes is looked upon as a noble minded and generous man ;—by no means—he is idle and impatient.

I heard two men speaking of a third, one of them said, Valerius kills himself by application to business : he passes days and nights in his office. The other laughed, and could scarcely recover from surprize. Valerius, according to him, is one of the most idle and dissipated of men : whom shall I believe ? Both.—They are both right. Valerius is a man of habitude :  
what



what he does to-night he will do to-morrow morning. If circumstances oblige him to apply to business for two days, he will hold to it six months without intermission: if other circumstances throw him for a moment into dissipation, he will wallow in it another six months.

A proportionate mixture of opposite qualities, from great characters, make men attain the end they propose. Ardour and patience are necessary to advance in the painful road of fortune. That man is happy, who, having but one of these qualities, finds himself in circumstances which require not them both; ardour was necessary—this he possesses. Had patience been required, he would have missed his object.

Persons distinguished by the elevation of their minds, or the force of character, are those who, perhaps, are the most easily known, because in general they have a predominant quality by which

every thing is explained to such as have the art of distinguishing.

Men are unjustly reproached with actions or sentiments contrary to those which they have previously done or expressed. They are looked upon as false, whereas they are only changed. They were carried away by the force of sentiment, and yielded to the impulse of generosity; but in the moment of reflection which followed, their interest prevailed.

There is no force of character in constantly doing one thing, however estimable it may be. He who studies every day of his life would have equally employed his time in playing, according to the state of his circumstances; but passing from pleasure to business, from dissipation to study is the mark of a mind independent and endowed with the greatest vigour.

There are certain awkwardnesses accompanying

companying actions which deprive them of all their merit. One man is obliging, and renders great services, for which nobody thanks him. Another lives at a great expence and passes for a miser. He spends nine hundred pounds, yet fordidness is perceptible; fifty pounds more would have made him appear generous.

The ardor of most men is but momentary, which is the cause of the incoherence of their conduct and sentiments.



OF DIFFERENT MANNERS OF BEING  
AFFECTED,

HOW are pleasures, the world and fortune to be justly appreciated? Life is divided into two epochas, that of desires and that of disgust. The odour of the dishes is delicious to the hungry guests who sit down to table, but disgusting to those who have made a good dinner.

Whom shall I consult upon pleasure and happiness? Must he be a young man, burning with desires, devoted to love, and who believes himself the only one who expresses the sentiments of it or feels its emotions? He is convinced that his mistress is the finest, most sensible, and delicate of women. His heart is inflamed by the chimera of friendship, and his imagination by the illusion of glory; his heart, his mind and senses, make him sigh after  
a thou-

a thousand gratifications not within his power.

Interrogate a man of maturer age, who perhaps reasons with himself, that he has never loved nor been loved? He recollects the deceits of his mistresses and the treason of his friends. His eyes now open to the illusion of glory; he knows how easily the suffrages of men are accorded, and how much meanness and fatigue is the price of grandeur. He has been intimately connected with persons of the greatest celebrity and consideration, in whose persons he saw nothing but men of intrigue, or the feeble instruments of female caprice, and the mode of the times.

Every man may feel a lively pleasure, but perhaps the heart and soul only render us capable of tasting happiness, for which reason those who possess not exquisite sensibility, have no pretensions to it.

We recollect pleasure with regret, but the remembrance of happiness lessens us into

## OF HAPPINESS.

HAPPINESS and pleasure affect us in a different manner, and to a certain degree, have nothing in common with each other.

Pleasure cannot be lasting; it would soon lose its charms, because the mind and senses would quickly be weakened by its vivacity. It leaves a void in the heart, and renders insipid every object which was interesting. Pleasure is not, like happiness, within ourselves; it is accidental, and depends on others. Every man may feel a lively pleasure, but perhaps the heart and soul only render us capable of tasting happiness, for which reason those who possess not exquisite sensibility, have no pretensions to it.

We recollect pleasure with regret, but the remembrance of happiness softens us  
into



into tears. Pleasure leaves a distinct recollection; we know the object by which it was produced. Happiness offers nothing determined, because it seems to reside in all who are about us, whilst we ourselves communicate it and embellish every object.

Happiness resembles a gentle warmth proceeding from ourselves, but which we nevertheless enjoy as if it were communicated to us. Pleasure, which is more exterior and lively, but less durable, is shed upon us like adventitious heat, of which we are soon deprived, because it is not natural.

How is it possible to describe that which comes not within our thoughts;—which belongs to sentiment, and has no determinate principle, yet nevertheless, embraces every thing;—which has no more reality than colours, sensible to the eye only, and nothing of themselves? It is sufficient if I have said what happiness is not,

not, without its being possible for me to express what it is.

Men pass from infancy to youth, from youth to age : they insensibly lose their faculties. If happiness be in man himself, how can a being, who experiences vicissitudes, embellish objects with the same colours, when the principle of action, and warmth by which he was animated, is weakened or extinguished ?

There are happy days, but no happy lives ; this would be an enchanting dream without once awakening to sorrow.

But if there be no happy men, there are some who are fortunate ; many have been favoured by a happy concurrence of circumstances, and have had many species of enjoyment conformable to their taste, character and sentiment. It is in this sense that the existence of happiness may be considered, and not in a manner absolute and durable.

There

There are certainly men whose lives have not been troubled by any violent chagrin, whose rude health has never been impaired by grief or infirmity, and who have arrived at an advanced age, after having enjoyed the pleasures of each period of life. They seem to have been happy; but this has not been demonstrated,

The manner of feeling constitutes happiness much more than the advantages we possess, and it is necessary to be convinced of this to be happy. It is in the general constitution of men, and in the particular character of each, that the principles of happiness are found.

In considering men in general, their sufferings surpass their pleasures and enjoyments. The people in every nation incessantly combat want, and privately enjoy certain sensations. They are strangers to voluptuousness, and the seeds of self-love are almost stifled in these beings, who are continually degraded by want and  
dependance,



dependance. They have not the satisfactory idea of themselves which elevates and aggrandizes their existence. By instinct they are disposed to fly from and forget themselves; hence comes in part the general craving of the people for spirituous and intoxicating liquors. It is not the pleasure of tasting bad wine which seduces a man of the lowest class; he seeks, without knowing it, to efface the remembrance of his situation; he wishes to raise his spirits which are depressed by wretchedness: hope lies at the bottom of the cup. In a state of intoxication he becomes another man; his heart is open to confidence, and he sees none but friends about him; he rises in his own opinion, and in that of others of the same class.

The most savage nations seek intoxication. In the East, where every body is under the yoke of despotism, thought appears to be a pernicious gift; like gold and silver it requires to be buried, and men strive to destroy it by the friendly aid of opium. In that country, madmen and  
idiots

idiots are objects of veneration. Under an oppressive government, being deprived of the sentiment of existence, is looked upon as a special favour of the Divinity.

The greatest pleasure of men, who compose the multitude, is the satisfying of hunger: they are unacquainted with the pleasures, emotions, violence, and ecstasies of the passion of love. Like animals, they are led by the impulsion of nature to unite themselves to each other, and this short felicity, this gleam of pleasure, adds to their misery by the fecundity which multiplies their wants. In this class of men, happiness consists in not suffering, and it is the business of legislators to fulfil so desirable an object.

Oh ye shepherds of great flocks! ye kings and sovereigns, whose susceptible minds receive pleasure from the happiness of others, turn your eyes from your court if you will follow the impulsion of your noble sentiments! You cannot make  
happy

happy the free courtiers about your persons.

An unquenchable thirst of riches, grandeur and distinction, is their governing principle. Turn your attention to the multitude to whom you may give a comfortable existence, the good effects of which will extend to the second generation.

When we think upon happiness, our ideas are carried to men of an elevated situation, in whom self-love and the passions produce pleasures which add to the sensations, and to which they frequently give a preference. That in which the people feel no other pleasure than the simple satisfaction of a want, to men of superior rank amounts to voluptuousness, which enjoyment is refined, heightened and prolonged.

Nature furnishes the seeds but art brings them to maturity. What is an ear of wild



wild corn compared to an ear of fine wheat produced in cultivated ground?

Nature has provided for the duration of the species by the attraction of physical pleasure. The rich man, or one in easy circumstances, joins many moral affections to physical sensations.

Let us suppose to ourselves a savage, or a poor man, incited by strong desire, and yielding to this impulsion with the first woman he meets, or with his rude companion. He has no idea of beauty; he makes no comparison; his imagination is not inflamed, nor does his heart feel the least emotion: self-love inspires him with nothing flattering, or which gives him a better opinion of himself. For him the short moment of pleasure is like an arrow shot into the air, which leaves not the smallest trace behind it.

To this simple and true description, oppose that of a man of the world, devoted to love and loaded with its favours. He has

has distinguished one woman from a great number. Her form, her figure, that agreeable yet undescribable something which acts so powerfully and instantaneously has touched his very soul. To see and hear her is to him supreme happiness. Silence and confusion are his first interpreters. At length he speaks to, presses and supplicates this woman, who is combating the same inclination. His agreeable qualities gain him a preference to his rivals; his ardour triumphs over every obstacle, and his mistress yields to his desires.

Recovered from the first transports, and again himself for a while, an effusion of the most tender sentiments succeeds to pleasure, which is but suspended, shortly to be renewed; he reposes in the happy calm of a gratified passion. The ardor of his desires is abated without being extinguished: he enjoys the past and the present, and sees the moment not far distant which brings him new transports. He is satisfied with his choice, and flattered by the resistance he for some time experienced; this increases  
the

the value of his conquest. Wit and sentiment animate their conversation. They will for ever love each other, and these moments of felicity will have no end; each revolving day will bring a repetition of them.—They believe so—they swear to it—charming illusion, which presents a chain of delicious enjoyments.

The pleasures which the cultivation of the mind and an exercised imagination, add to what nature has given, have nothing in common with those of the people. The organisation is the same; but the faculties of the latter are to a certain degree benumbed, and never exercised but upon very few objects: those of men in a superior class carry them with rapidity over an extended sphere of thought and sentiment. It may therefore be said, that the happiness of these consists in the exercise of their faculties. He who is pressed with hunger feels a great pleasure in satisfying it; the man whose self-love is accompanied with delicacy and sensibility, equally requires gratification; a man who

L

possesses



possesses talents feels a desire to employ them; he who is susceptible of a profound sentiment feels a pressing inclination to attach himself, to be affected, to have his feelings sensibly touched. But will emotions give happiness to the man of sensibility; will the vain find it in distinctions, or will it result from the suffrages of a whole society to the man whose self-love renders him covetous of praise? As there are no bounds to the desires of passion, the effect of all these momentary advantages will, perhaps, wholly consist in exciting more violent desires. Reason alone may moderate the passions of the moral man, and reason is a pilot which manœuvres in vain during the height of the storm. What can it do to direct a bark which is carried away by the impetuous gusts of contrary winds?

We are taught and invited by education to mix with general society, and by means of opinion, to join our existence to a multitude of beings which may sensibly affect our interior tranquillity. Education should,

should, on the contrary, incline a man to be contented, and to search within himself the peace of conscience, that by its suffrages, and the estimation of himself, he may find uninterrupted happiness.

If the sphere of pleasures, affection, and sentiment be increased for the man above the common class, the number of pains, agitations, and vexations are augmented in an immense proportion. There are fewer physical evils than torments produced by the passions and the disorder of imagination. The real blessings of health and tranquillity, all the pleasures of nature become insipid to him who is agitated by ambition, tormented by vanity, or whom envy consumes. You see a man to whom fortune has been prodigal in her favours, and who has received from nature a healthy and vigorous constitution. He is beloved by his wife and children, who are all dear to him; his presence gives joy and pleasure to his family, and yet he appears in it but for a moment. If he lived in the country he would enjoy the pleasure of doing good

to his numerous tenants, and he has made but three visits to his vast domains. This man feels not the value of health ; he enjoys not his fortune. His life, which might leisurely pass animated with different interests, is consumed in agitation and fear. Independent by his riches, he devotes himself to servitude and swallows disgust. His sleep, which ought to be peaceful, is troubled by envy and inquietude. He writes, cringes, and solicits ; he flies from pleasure in the pursuit of employment contrary to his genius. What supreme good is at length to be the reward of so many cares ? He has renounced life for forty years to shew himself two years in decrepid old age, his body hung over with two yards of ribbon.

Passions are like physical desires ; they lead to disorder ; but exhausted strength puts an end to the latter, whilst the mind is almost constantly exposed to the passions, and capable of abandoning itself with excess to the inquiet and incessant desires of ambition or the impulsions of vanity. Philosophy affords but few means of repressing  
the



the passions, and their continued vivacity permits not the enjoyment of happiness. Those who approach it the nearest are men whom moderation of character preserves from excess without weakening the sentiment which may procure them enjoyments. The happiness of the people is in the hands of those who govern; these can remove from them misery and want, and procure them employment and subsistence. The happiness of more elevated classes is not less in the power of legislators.

The republican constitution seems more calculated to satisfy the moral want of distinctions and emotions. Every man under this kind of government feels his abilities, and the means of turning them to advantage are numerous and frequent. The administration, the honours of the peerage are open in England to the learned and eloquent lawyer. Each citizen is an active part of a great body: his self-love is not confined to his person; he enjoys the advantages of his country. If monarchies

have not the same means, they have others not less powerful, the love of the sovereign, and the honour and virtues of each profession; distinctions are there the aliment of self-love.

After having spoken of the happiness of the people in a body, and of the other classes of society, it remains to be examined whether or not there be men happy in an absolute order by a concurrence of circumstances united to a favourable constitution.

He who has had the most continued and lively enjoyments in the order of his strongest sensations, seems to me to be the most happy man.

I take, for example, the duke of Epernon, and suppose, that confined to his bed by a fit of the gout, he had traced back in his mind the events of more than sixty years of his life. What a space would he have perceived between the feeble beginning of his fortune, and the degree of splendor to which

which he rapidly brought it ! Favoured from his infancy by a great king, and treated by this monarch as the most beloved child, favour, riches, and power were united to render him happy. What enjoyments for a haughty, proud, and ambitious man ! Kings succeeded to each other, and he remained in possession of the honors and a part of the power which had been conferred upon him. His life, several times threatened, was preserved by such extraordinary events as to persuade the vulgar that a particular genius watched over his preservation. He lived without infirmity to the most advanced age. He was sometimes persecuted, but never overcome, and difficulties served but to display his courage and open him new resources. When all France shrunk under the power of Richelieu, he only, amidst the proscribed and trembling great, still preserved an ascendancy which awed this minister ; he preserved his stately height like great trees, which in forests laid waste, time and the axe have respected. It may be supposed that the duke of Epemon would



have found himself happy in contemplating in imagination the progress of his prosperity, the dangers from which he had escaped, the pleasures of his life, the homages of the great, and the dignity, pomp, and riches which embellished and rendered illustrious his long career.

Suppose Voltaire, whose self-love was so delicate, in whom the love of glory was so predominant, and who arrived at extreme old age, without having exhausted the gift of thought, had reflected upon his active and honourable life. In seeing the nation prostrate before his genius, considering his various triumphs, and sinking under the weight of his laurels, ought not he to have acknowledged within himself that he had been happy?

The Marshal Saxe, in his last moments, said to a man whom he loved; *Friend, I have had a fine dream.* These words prove that he had the sentiment of happiness.

He

He whose passions are mild, whose fortune is equal to his desires and situation, who passes his life with his relations and friends and dies in their arms without remorse, fear, or pain, is another happy man.

Beings in whom the flame of love continually rages with violence, and whose heart furnishes new aliment to their passions, feel delicious emotions and give an idea of happiness. Who can estimate what passes in the heart and mind of a man violently in love? What numerous enjoyments are offered to him by his imagination; exalted by tenderness and heated by the ardour of the senses, every thing is animated about the amorous man; like him, to whom the delirium of a fever presents phantoms; he hears and sees persons absent; he lives in an enchanted world: time ceases for him. Who can tell how many ages a man of exquisite sensations has lived?

If, as I have observed, the manner of  
feeling

feeling be the real value of things, none can judge of the real situation of others. The sick man who appears overcome by his sufferings, is, perhaps, at the same moment in a ravishing ecstasy \*. In the possession of advantages, the most flattering to men, a want of judgment † frequently renders useless all that nature seems to have done for their happiness,

The irritation of disordered self-love, joined to an excessive delicacy of sentiment filled the life of Jean-Jacques Rousseau with bitterness. Neither success, riches, nor love, could have made him happy in procuring him transient enjoyments, which he would have more sensibly

\* A man upon the wheel, whose confessor exhorted him to resignation, answered, " Father, it is " a long time since I have been in so calm a state " of mind."

† A man of the present age, extremely rich, and having it in his power to procure himself every pleasure, enjoying perfect health, and endowed with exterior advantages, died with grief, because he was not a gentleman.

tasted



tasted than any other man. As an edifice falls under the weight of too heavy a roof, so was his head weakened by the burden of extreme self-love. This had fatigued his life, and his last writings attest the change which his sublime mind had undergone.

Nature has distributed portions of happiness upon thrones, in palaces, in cabins, and in dungeons. When an abundance of rain falls upon the earth, it runs into sandy soils without leaving any traces, whilst it moistens others, fertilizes and becomes incorporated with them. To this may the elements of happiness be compared. They are assembled in vain about certain beings, whilst others know how to appropriate and enjoy them.

The greatest obstacle to happiness frequently arises from a disproportion between the mind, character and physical strength, and from a mixture of undetermined inclinations and vague passions.

The

The heart and mind agitated by light and opposite impressions, know not where to repose, and are never powerfully drawn to an object capable of satisfying them. In most men, there is a mixture of half-passions, and weak and uncertain sensations. They resemble guests who taste, without pleasure, of every dish before them, without fixing upon any one in particular. Many people attain the end of life, without having tasted enjoyment; and this for want of a sufficient force of desire.

There is a kind of happiness which escapes observation, and which offers nothing positive, although it be real and extended: it is the well-being, which results from the plenitude of existence, or the abundance of vital spirits. Its influence is, in some measure, shed upon every surrounding object—the man is happy, solely, because he exists. For him nature is an enchanted *parterre*; by the sight of which he is charmed to excess. The air he breaths seems pure and dilated, and, at every

every instant, appears to give him new life. It is in youth, in the age of vigour, that this happiness of existence is most sensible, and then needs not the addition of lively pleasures. Hence comes that tender and delicious recollection of the spring of life which we experience when bordering upon old age. It produces pleasures without retracing any particular or remarkable ones. The prism of youth gave a high colouring to every object: that habitation, those woods and meadows are still the same; but the eye, which contemplates them, is changed.

From these reflections upon happiness I will conclude, that nature, for the most part, bestows what is necessary to it. Reason is not, however, without its influence; and the comparison of our state is the surest means it can employ to make us sensible of the advantages we possess, and of diminishing the idea of misfortune. How many people would be happy, if, sometimes considering the advantages they have received  
from



from nature, the property they possess, and the health they enjoy, they would compare their situation with that of others; if they would say to themselves—the loss of this property, and these advantages, indifferent to me by habitude, would be the greatest misfortune: would they but recollect the time, when they so strongly desired the objects which they now languishingly possess, and consider that these possessions and advantages would render thousands happy, which envy their state; their desires would become more moderate, and their mind more satisfied.

Life is a bad sort of stuff, and receives all its value from the embroidery. Men are often more attached to a certain manner of living than to life itself.

Life resembles a minuet. We make a few steps to return; and make our reverence at the place whence we departed.

Dignities and greatness are rich robes,  
which

which dazzle others, and hang heavy upon those who wear them.

He is a weak man who never qualifies himself for more than one situation in life.

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#### OF THE LENGTH OF TIME.

**TIME** is measured by the impatience of desire, and the dread of a fatal moment to which we approach.

Time seems to be abridged by the epochs and divisions which give us an idea of it. The uniformity of situations, when they are not too much agitated, increases the idea of its duration. The traveller, who crosses great plains, is more impatient than he would be upon a road, varied by woods, mountains and habitations. The imagination reposes, with pleasure, upon  
successive

ſucceſſive objects, which mark both ſpace and time as they paſs.

Monks feel not as much languor as men of the world ; becauſe all their hours are differently employed. Each diviſion of the day, conſecrated to prayer or reading, offer to the imagination a ſhort ſpace to paſs over. The contemplation of the duties of a whole day, would be frightful.

There is no time for the Divinity ; never changing, either in thought or ſentiment, and being univerſal, for him there is neither preſent nor future.

We ſometimes reſemble the Supreme Being in this reſpect ; when we are greatly affected by a delicious ſenſation, or even by heavy grief. The continuation, in the ſame degree, of a lively ſentiment confounds every thing. Time is then no more ; nothing can eſtabliſh the diſtribution of it, becauſe there is no difference in the ſentiment.

In.



In youth, the senses have a wonderful aptitude to being affected. This is the season of the emotions of the soul, and the delirium of the passions. Impressions are strong and lasting; all objects are new, and their effects more sensible. The desires are strong and tumultuous, and curiosity is insatiable. Youth live in futurity, and imagine to themselves pleasures far above those which they have the power of enjoying.

The frequency of desires and enjoyments multiply the epochas of early age: life seems to have no period, and to be an inexhaustible treasure. The variety of situations necessarily make the time of youth pass rapidly; but the ardour of desire makes it sometimes appear long: it is at this age that we so frequently say, I would give a year of my life to be at such a day.

At the epocha which succeeds to that of youth, desires become less ardent; the situation of the man is determined, his curiosity weakened, and his occupations fixed.

M

His

His life has no longer so many vibrations, because his sentiments and ideas have more consistence. He quietly enjoys the present, and desires, not with impatience, the future. At this age he has seen a resemblance in every thing. His passions become his tastes, and he œconomizes his pleasures. Time then more swiftly glides away, because he has fewer desires and more pleasures, and fears the approach of old age, which he sees in perspective. He soon begins to calculate with himself; he perceives that half at least of his course is run. His faculties diminish; the fear of seeing them annihilated, of finding the source of his pleasures dried up, make his days seem to pass the more rapidly, as each day deprives him of a part of himself.

## OF ENNUI\*.

ENNUI is the painful sentiment of existence. Extreme vivacity of mind ends in languor, because objects are too rapidly passed in review, without resting upon any one in particular. A lively imagination, unaccompanied with strength of mind, is a constant principle of languor.

A mixture of indolence and ardor, nearly equal, must render a man unhappy. In this state of uncertainty, he feels the torments of desire, and an aversion to the cares and efforts by which it might be satisfied. Alternately excited by indolence and ambition, he enjoys neither the charms of repose nor the pleasures of success.

\* The translator has chosen, on this occasion, to adopt the French word; which may be rendered in English by lassitude, languor, weariness, disgust, impatience, according to circumstances.



When love and its pleasures have entirely filled up the space of youth, the following epocha of life has neither tastes nor desires. The enervated mind has no longer sufficient strength to enjoy pleasures, disengaged from the senses; it had remained without food or exercise, and the senses are now entirely benumbed. In such a state, a man wanders like a phantom in the midst of pleasures, which the generality of men pursue with avidity. Having no interest in society, nor capacity for business, he feels the void of languor.

The ambitious man, who is obliged to renounce all his hopes, is in a state similar to that I have just described. Wholly governed by an object which he possesses not, the universe is for him a sorrowful abode. In vain does the spring embellish the earth: it is the rising of the prince, and not that of the sun, which has an effect upon his mind. He is insensible to the delightful view of nature; that of

a nu-

a numerous anti-chamber alone can interest him, and open his soul to joy. He carries with him, every where, an overwhelming languor, which nothing can dissipate.

WIT AND MORAL

A numerous and distinguished  
body of gentlemen and ladies  
were present and after the  
the service with them every  
of the morning and the  
of the day.

The service was  
conducted in a  
most impressive  
manner and the  
participation of  
the ladies was  
very noticeable.

The service was  
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# DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

A MINISTER IN DISGRACE

AND

A PHYSICIAN.

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THE MINISTER.

I HAVE heard much of your abilities, Sir; and, in complaisance to my friends, am determined to confide myself to your skill, however weak may be my hopes of a cure.

PHYSICIAN.

You think, perhaps, my lord, that I apply myself to the cure of bodily infirmities. My whole attention is directed to those of the mind; and it is by the cure of these that the former often disappear. I am a moral physician. Most of the disor-

ders of the animal œconomy arise from the licentiousness of the passions. This I have learned from experience. I have studied all the affections of the mind, their principles and effects; and have endeavoured to discover the opposition of the passions to each other; the different inclinations by which men are governed, and their greater or lesser degree of force; the influence of indolence, which weakens and modifies them, and the greater or lesser domination of vanity, which substitutes tormenting chimeras to realities, which would become a source of happiness. My three means of cure consist in *calming*, *directing* and *animating*. After this exposition, you are to judge whether or not you will enter into explanations with me. In this case I expect you will be candid, as dissimulation would be useless to you; taught by the habitude of reflection how to penetrate what is attempted to be hidden, it frequently happens, that those who say but a word to me, have no need of proceeding farther.

MINISTER.

## MINISTER.

Your manner of treatment is of little consequence to me, provided you perform a cure. The remedies hitherto prescribed have fatigued me extremely, without affording me the least relief.

## PHYSICIAN.

Mine have, at least, this advantage, that they injure not the constitution.

## MINISTER.

For which reason I am inclined to try them. I will relate to you the nature of my indisposition, and you may be assured of my candour. For the last twelve months I have had such a weight upon my spirits, as to absorb all my faculties. I have taken medicines proper for disorders in the liver; but these have had no effect.

## PHYSICIAN.

Your lordship's illness seems to be a serious one. Your complexion, the hollow-  
ness



ness of your eyes, and your emaciated appearance, incline me to suspect that your lordship has an obstruction in the liver.

MINISTER.

This is what I have been told. I will farther observe to you, Sir, that my digestion is difficult, and my sleep troubled with the most fatiguing dreams. I constantly think I am falling from the top of a mountain, and that I am pursued by foxes and serpents, which bark and hiss about my ears.

PHYSICIAN.

I cannot conceal from your lordship that your illness is dangerous. I am no stranger to the nature of it; but, in my whole life, I have never cured above two or three persons who laboured under it to the same degree.

MINISTER.

And what do you call it, Sir?

PHYSICIAN.

## PHYSICIAN.

You know, my lord, that nothing is more dangerous than the small-pox, when the pustules come not to an eruption. The repercussion of the variolic matter, which should discharge itself exteriorly, produces the most serious effects. Your lordship is exactly in this situation; your illness is an ambition not brought to a head.

## MINISTER.

You do not know me, Sir; you judge of my illness by the situation in which I have been: but I am a philosopher; and, if I sometimes regret my having quitted the administration, it is from the desire I have of being useful to mankind. I think nobody can suspect me of coveting riches.

## PHYSICIAN.

I do not say that, my lord: I am persuaded of your disinterestedness. I will agree with your lordship that your object is the happiness of men; but agree with me in your turn, that you wish to be

be the author of it, and that, in your idea, it is less valuable when conferred by others.

MINISTER.

A commendable self-love, in my opinion; and, to a certain degree, I do not deny it.

PHYSICIAN.

I pretend not to blame your lordship; but the question is, the cause of your sufferings, and the means of removing it. The most able of all physicians would be the king.—But perhaps his majesty is not determined to employ efficacious means to cure your lordship. All I can undertake is, to mitigate by using palliatives; for the illness is almost incurable, especially when the patient makes no effort to second the physician, and that, in his character, he has no means of combating so dangerous a complaint. Your lordship will permit me to ask, if you have children; and if you love them?

MINISTER.



MINISTER. (*with a sigh*)

Do I love my child!—I have an only son, the hope of my family, for whom I thought of procuring the most brilliant establishment, at the time I was driven from place.

PHYSICIAN.

I perceive your lordship had your son's preferment at heart. But was he equally desirous of his own happiness? and was not it his name which flattered his self-love? Was not it, in some degree, the perpetuity of himself, so to speak, which he had in view? Pardon me, my lord; but I am obliged to speak to you in the language of truth, which your lordship had lost the habitude of hearing.—Is it long since your lordship has seen your son?

MINISTER.

Almost six months. In my present state of languor, I avoid all society: it is the effect of my situation.

PHYSICIAN.

## PHYSICIAN.

I perceive, my lord, that your son is not necessary to your happiness, since you deprive yourself of the pleasure of seeing him. May I ask after her ladyship?

## MINISTER.

We live but little together; her taste differs from mine. She has other societies.

## PHYSICIAN.

Before I can undertake to give your lordship relief, you must permit me some questions, which, in any other circumstances, would be very indiscreet. Has your lordship ever had any tender attachments?

## MINISTER.

To say the truth, I look upon sentiment, and what is called the heart, as words devoid of sense, invented by women to justify their weaknesses. I have always had an attachment of habitude, which is,  
in

in some measure, decent in a man in place, and useful to gain him information: this, and an inclination to thwart the projects of others, is all the information I can give you upon the subject.

PHYSICIAN.

I conceive your lordship's heart not to be susceptible, for which I am very sorry. It is an illusion, if you please; but it would be a real advantage in your present situation. The beauties of nature have, as I imagine, but few charms for your lordship.

MINISTER.

I have constantly heard speak of nature, but I know not exactly what it is; and I confess to you, that the decorations of an opera appear to me as agreeable as the finest garden; not but I have expended a great deal in English gardens, and in ruins.—

PHYSICIAN.

With respect to ruins, ministers have much



much in their power for such kinds of ornament.

MINISTER.

An ill-timed pleasantry, Sir—but I pardon you, on account of its singularity.

PHYSICIAN.

Pardon me, my lord—I return to the subject. Your lordship is insensible to the charms of nature. Hence I must conclude, that the beautiful of any kind has no power over your mind. A fine statue, or picture, or excellent music, has undoubtedly no effect upon your lordship; for arts are the imitation only of nature.

MINISTER.

All this I confess. But why these questions?

PHYSICIAN.

To know what has an effect upon you, that I may find means to increase the action of certain things, and diminish that of others. Have you any taste for letters?

MINISTER.

## MINISTER.

I have always had men of letters at my table, but their conversation was not very interesting to me; and as for books, I like those only which treat of present affairs.

## PHYSICIAN.

The Gazette, for instance! It is agreeable enough to read; but the events related in it may cause disagreeable reflections in your present state of mind. I had some idea that your lordship was fond of literature; but I perceive, that all you intended by receiving men of letters was, to procure yourself public suffrage. They were the trumpets of your fame.

## MINISTER.

Have you finished your questions, Sir?

## PHYSICIAN.

I have, my lord, since I know your constitution and illness. This is serious; and your constitution leaves but few means to be employed in the cure.

N

MINISTER.

## MINISTER.

You have cured people, as you assure me, who were in the same situation.

## PHYSICIAN.

It is true : but the patients had, within themselves, resources which my art teaches me to develope, and of which I knew how to make the best use. One of them had a taste for letters and the arts; the other had a heart capable of tender attachment. I taught them both how to turn to advantage their inclinations and affections.

## MINISTER.

Are there no other means which you can efficaciously employ for me ?

## PHYSICIAN.

Your mind is not susceptible ; your heart is incapable of tender affection ; your age permits not much sensual enjoyment, and you have no taste for the fine arts. Judge, my lord, of the difficulty of rendering you any service. I have nothing to proceed upon. Those who are accustomed to lively pleasures,



pleasures, have lost the means, as well as the habitude, of being animated by mild and peaceful amusements. Their mind contracts the habitude of languor, like that which, for a moment, is felt after the noisy explosion of a fire-work. It is a great misfortune to stand in need of being strongly interested, and yet incapable of it in every way but one. Folly is the domination of one only object. To anticipate this in its principle, several objects must be made to act upon the mind, so as to produce an opposition, and excite a moderate combat of different inclinations, which prevents the tyranny of a single one. Your lordship is not far from a state of folly, if you take not great care.

## MINISTER.

Sir! Do you think as you speak?—A man whose judgment, I venture to say, has been applauded—

## PHYSICIAN.

Yes, my lord; but that man was in his element when his knowledge shone forth.

N 2

Nothing

Nothing is pleasing in your eyes but the attitude of respect, and praises only can flatter your ears. Your attention is engaged by nothing but the movement of great interests, which are continually before you : I cannot procure an anti-chamber full of men, who come to solicit favours, nor furnish your table with attentive auditors, who are ready to laugh, or applaud, according as your lordship is gay, or inclined to serious discussion. Finally, I cannot fill your mind with affairs of importance, which concern great personages, or have an influence upon the fate of millions of men.

## MINISTER.

I have, then, no remedy to hope for; and your profound knowledge——

## PHYSICIAN.

——Will not be quite useless. It will serve to stop the progress of your disorder, and diminish its force; remedies would be ineffectually applied to your mind, because it has no taste, and is incapable of affection;

tion; therefore the body only can be operated upon, and in this respect my advice, my lord, is very simple: your lordship must take strong exercise, and give to your body an extreme movement, so as to fatigue it, that the dominion of the mind may become less sensible: you must frequently change the air, converse with men you have never seen, whom your reputation will, for some time, render attentive to your person; their consideration for you will be but momentary, but it will create you some illusion; for, in fact, what is it you want?—to engage the attention of others. Dionysius, the tyrant, after being dethroned, became a schoolmaster: this was not badly judged; he was listened to; he distributed rewards and punishments; it was still, in fact, an exercise of power\*.

MINISTER.

But, Sir, you are a moral physician, and

\* M. Hewman maintains that this last circumstance, related in the life of Dionysius, is not true.

*Translator.*



you prescribe exercise to cure me of the jaundice. Any other physician, whom I might have consulted, would, without pretending, like you, to cure the affections of the mind, have pointed out the same remedy.

PHYSICIAN.

What I prescribe your lordship are no more than palliatives, and I agree that any other physician would have done the same thing; but there is one remedy which I hesitate to propose: it is not common, yet applicable to the disorders which I profess to cure; the fear of alarming your lordship, has hitherto prevented me from mentioning it.

MINISTER.

What is it? I am determined to adopt it, be it what it may.

PHYSICIAN.

Very well, my lord—it is to get yourself exiled.

MINISTER.

MINISTER.

Do you think so? Would you propose to me to add to my misfortune?

PHYSICIAN.

Ah! my lord, you know not the pleasure an ambitious man has in being exiled; exile is a continuation of public consideration: there is something agreeable in a misfortune which is not common, which is confined to ourselves, and distinguishes us from others. A man in exile produces a greater effect in the world; a minister in disgrace is more talked of; he is obliged to summon all his fortitude, to bear up under oppression; there is merit in supporting it, the mind acquires new vigour—

MINISTER.

—But, Sir, I am surprized you do not prescribe a prison.

PHYSICIAN.

Do not joke, my lord. A few months in a castle are not to be despised; this might give some consideration: persecu-

tion has its charms; but I confine myself to methods more mild; think of the pleasures of exile, compared to the inconveniences of liberty. If a man had usurped a great name, and had made a splendid appearance in the world, what more cruel torment could he suffer, than to be obliged to live in the same society, degraded and despoiled?

#### MINISTER.

Your comparison has some relation to the situation of a minister out of place; but the loss of liberty is frightful.

#### PHYSICIAN.

A thousand times less to a fallen minister than the repeated disdain of those with whom he lives, and the continual recollection of what he has lost. Exile is not, for him, accompanied by the mortification of finding his equals in those who are about him, and of being like every other man in society; of reading indifference in each countenance, of being confounded with the crowd, and elbowed on

all



all sides; of being accosted with familiarity by persons who, when he was in power, were prostrate before him, and of continually hearing the conversation turn upon his successor, his plan of operation, and the favour he enjoys. In exile he is filled with the hope of obtaining his liberty, and imagines that, after his enlargement, he shall make a more distinguished figure in the world. Believe me, my lord, exile has many advantages; and I take it to be a refinement of malice in kings, not to exile their ministers, instead of rendering them to the common society of men, there to suffer their contempt, and be buried in the midst of the living. The liberty a king gives to a minister, is a mark of contempt, and as much as to say to him,—I fear neither your cabals nor those of your friends! It seems that when a minister is exiled, he has the honour of being feared, and that his intrigues, and the influence he may have upon the minds of the people, are to be guarded against. Consideration for a man in exile, is preserved by his being at a distance; but, constantly under the inspection

tion of society, he loses a part of his merit. Reflect upon this, my lord, and you will perceive how advantageous an exile would be to you. I think I could answer for your health, if the king would confer upon you that favour.

They who are governed by self-love, whose actions are directed by vanity, having no solid pleasures of the mind, nor of the senses even, feel a sensible uneasiness when they engage not the attention of those about them. The perpetual want of being flattered and attended to in society, renders them insensible to almost every kind of pleasure. Their self-love is a real malady.

Men governed by the passion of love or ambition, and all who are tormented with a reigning desire, have moments of languor; each day produces for them but a few hours of enjoyment.

The

The contrariety of tastes and passions, the dominion or annihilation of an inclination, and that of the faculties, are feeble causes of languor. A happy mixture of leisure and occupation animates men, and makes them susceptible of every pleasure.

Men to whom enjoyments are become insipid by their variety, and the facility of acquiring them, are no longer susceptible of any kind of passion. Convinced of the nothingness of ambition, fatiated with the pleasures of love, and, by their delicacy and discernment become difficult upon the arts, upon wit, manners and literature; it must be something singular, or extraordinary, that can afford them amusement. If their mind has preserved any of its faculties, the novelty of misfortune is, perhaps, the only thing which can rouse them from languor. This state of apathy ultimately produces universal disdain. It leads men to despise fame, and, perhaps, to the contempt of others. Persons in such a state, are those who, so to speak, have quickly  
made



made the tour of the planet they inhabit.

There are people whose conversation or presence ever excites languor in others: they may be divided into two classes—men who, by the void in their minds, communicate weariness; and they who are fatiguing by a superabundance of uninteresting conversation; thus want and superfluity are sources of languor.

CHARACTER

## CHARACTER OF A TIRESOME MAN.

CLEOPHON has never been able to attain a unison of ideas with those who converse with him. When he relates, he never assembles the circumstances which ought to make his narrative interesting: he expatiates upon trifles, and never changes the tone of his voice, nor raises his gesture; he has no variety of action, and is quite surprized to see his hearers yawn at a story which had made him laugh. Cleophon knows not how to converse. His reasons are ill-timed, and he wants the discernment necessary to chuse proper subjects. He is unmerciful in details upon indifferent matters, and in his length of reasoning, when a word would be sufficient. He has no flexibility of mind, and it frequently happens that he answers his own ideas, without hearkening to what is said by others. His language and manner are the same, whether he speaks to a lady,  
a wit,

a wit, or to a man in place. Cleophon has, unfortunately, some sense and information which, to him, are so many more means of rendering himself insupportable. Women, men of sense, and fools even, equally avoid him. He is like a discordant instrument in a concert. Every one trembles when he begins to speak; nobody harkens to him; and the whole circle waits with impatience until he has finished. He produces the same effect as the loud ringing of a bell; it suspends conversation, which, when the noise ceases, is immediately renewed. It must not be supposed that delicate persons are his only victims. Languor is a contagion which spreads itself upon every class of men. The porter, the coachman, and valet of Cleophon feel the same languor with which their master infects society. The servant behind his chair, yawns, and returns to the antichamber to complain of his fatiguing narratives, and dull dissertations.

In virtues, and most actions we admire, without considering the force which is the principle of them.

The



The tears we strive to hide are the most affecting. The violence we thus do ourselves shews both courage and sensibility.

Laughter is never more strong than when we endeavor to suppress it. Every opposition strengthens desire: the wave which meets with obstacles foams, becomes impetuous, or rises into the air.

Liberty was given to man to leave him the merit of virtue.

He who incessantly yields to desires soon becomes insensible of their charms.

Constitutional virtues are nothing more than want of desire. Virtue consists in the combat of the will and its triumph over desires.

Justice spares the mind much pain. Good qualities in a private man are so many virtues.

The

The sacrifice of fame, the combat of the most tender affections, and the painful moderation of generosity and sensibility constitute the virtue of a public man.

A portion of pride sufficient to remind us of what we owe to ourselves, and sensibility enough to prevent our forgetting what we owe to others, will produce the virtue of modern times.

Taste is not dangerous, except when the pursuit of its objects is the constant employment of our time.

## OF FRIENDSHIP.

IT is frequently said, that those who can hate, know how to love; as if these two sentiments had the same principle. Affection comes from the heart, and hatred from irritated self-love, or some inclination frustrated.

Persons must love something in common, before their love for each other can be durable. What, except virtue, can we love, without fearing that jealousy or opposition of interests will diminish the warmest friendship?

How can friendship exist between vicious persons? After having broken all other ties, can those of friendship be expected to contain them?

O

The



The presence of a friend is necessary to us: we wish to divide with him our pleasures, by which they become more lively; but in love, we want to be alone, and need not the addition of any thing foreign to it. Friendship increases the value of objects; but love supplies the place of every thing.

Friendship is to love, what an engraving is to a painting.

Love, having an end to fulfil, has its meridian, decline, and conclusion.

We wish friendship were eternal, whilst in general it has no solid basis to rest upon. It is like Ixion embracing a cloud.

Character changes, situations and fortune vary, affairs become multiplied, and taste less delicate: a man has new attachments, he becomes a husband and father; new relations are established between him and others; and yet it is expected, a former attachment should survive all these vicissitudes,

vicissitudes, without losing any part of its force or charms, and should equally engage the heart.

## THE TWO FEMALE FRIENDS.

AGLAÉ was in a convent, and had the most tender friendship for Doris. They resembled two young plants which grew up together. They felt every thing in common, and reciprocally communicated their pains and pleasures. They understood each other by a single word, and seemed to have a particular language to express their thoughts. Their friendship increased in proportion as they acquired the age when the senses begin to be animated. The secret and powerful inclination which beings have to become united, attracted each to the other. They felt infinite pleasure in meeting, were prodigal in

their caresses, and their minds seemed to be agitated by most of the emotions of love. Was ever friendship more tender!—Their mild and equal characters, their sensible and affectionate minds seemed to promise a continuation of it. Aglaé left the convent, and was married. A new object took possession of her heart, and infatuated her senses. What was the situation of Doris? She became the confident of her friend, who never came to visit her but to speak of her own happiness. Doris was married in her turn, and the similarity of their situations seemed to produce in them an increase of friendship: their communications were mutual. But one of them was soon led away by the torrent of dissipation, whilst the other was concentrated in the circle of her family: one ceased to love her husband, who soon had successors in her heart: the other had children whom she loved with all the tenderness of a mother, and her whole time was employed in directing their education. What subject of conversation now remained to Aglaé and Doris?—One spoke of her lover, and the other



other of her children. They no longer understood each other; the objects of their attention bore no resemblance, and opposite sentiments had possession of their minds: the remembrance of their former connections was still dear to them, but their intercourse became languishing. There was no longer between them a conformity of inclination, manners and sentiment; nevertheless their friendship, although languid and without motive will, perhaps, for twenty years, be quoted as a model.

ALCESTES has an intimate friend. He becomes enamoured, and his friend then holds but the second place in his affections. Sentiments are like diamonds, in which the least difference in size and quality makes the greatest in their price.

VALSIN is making a great fortune. He fills an eminent place, the functions of which are absolutely foreign to his friend. He can give him but a few moments, and it is impossible to confide to him interests too far removed from his situation. Of  
 O 3 what

what use would it be to ask his advice, upon matters which he does not understand? Their affection must naturally diminish. They do not quarrel, but their friendship consists only in the name.

Another man loves hunting, music, or the theatre. He has a friend, who is fond of the same amusements. He ceases to take pleasure in these: his friend's taste changes also; but his attention is directed to different objects; he has other pursuits in life. What have these intimate friends to converse upon? What object interests them in common?

Two friends have been united for twenty years by a conformity of temper, character, and taste: their connection seems to be as lasting as their lives. One of them becomes unhealthy. His temper changes, he is difficult, and expects extraordinary attention. His friend remains attached to him, as well from a constancy of character, as because he has in some measure engaged to do it in the eyes of the world; but he  
suffers

suffers interiorly ; dissimulates, and, in spite of himself, becomes deceitful : unhappy is it for him if he is under obligations to his friend ! He finds himself bound with the most galling chains ; he can no longer act according to his own sentiments ; his mind is captive, his tongue forced to express what he does not feel, and his eyes to shew marks of grief or satisfaction of which he does not partake. Examine his heart. So much constraint has produced hatred, and this false friendship, yet favourably spoken of by every body seem, in the eyes of the world, to constitute his happiness.

“ Most lasting friendships,” says the Cardinal de Retz, “ are produced by a  
“ continuation of happiness. There is  
“ no person,” adds the Cardinal, “ who  
“ thinks not he does honour to the  
“ wretch he serves.”

If principles, so frequently confirmed by experience, were engraved on the minds of men, they would complain less of each other. Events, which are contrary to these



examples, ought to be looked upon as fortunate; and we should previously expect to find levity and perfidy in mankind.

Friends frequently become insupportable in adversity; they abound in counsels contrary to our inclinations, and reproach us with the faults we may have committed; they blame the principle whence they arose, although in other cases they have a thousand times admired it. They wish the fire to give warmth, but not a burning heat; in the most trifling circumstances we must conduct ourselves according to their manner. When fortune is adverse, the suffering friend becomes a subject, upon which self-love and an imperious mind are anxious to exercise an empire.

*Screen me from my friends, cried the proscribed Gourrille, I shall know how to defend myself against my enemies.*

Beneficence is frequently nothing more than a secret desire of domination.

The

The testament of most men, is only the publication of their indifference, ingratitude and pride,

Our love for others is frequently in proportion to the power we have of obliging them; we become indifferent about their welfare the moment it depends no longer upon our services.

We wish to make others happy; but not that by their own efforts they should become so.

It sometimes happens that women love none among their friends, but the living witnesses of the charms, successes, and agreeablenesses of their youth,

It has always been said, that equality was necessary to the union of friendship. Reflection and examples prove there are exceptions to this antiquated maxim.

A rich and powerful friend, and one without fortune, accord perfectly with each  
each

each other. The former finds an object whereupon to exercise his beneficence and domination: the latter, in some measure, an object of worship, and an association in all the advantages of his friend; in his fame, credit, and successes of every kind, they all become his own. Raised by friendship to the rank of his protector, nobody is more interested in his support. These, it will be said, are the ties of interest; I allow it, if there be no natural inclination; but if this exists, it will be more solid, lively and durable between two friends whose fortunes are widely different. Self-love will be perpetually animated in one, by the pleasure of conferring happiness in the other, by all the enjoyments in which he finds himself an associate, and by the attention he receives from others on account of the affection his friend bears him.

Man has more need to admire than is generally supposed; and he voluntarily yields to this sentiment when there is no rivalry.

If



If equality were essentially necessary to friendship, they would never exist between a master and his slave or servant. What signifies the name? Whether it be called attachment, or any thing else; is not the sentiment which renders one being precious to another always an affection?

When equality is supposed necessary, an equality of every kind must be admitted as essential; such as that of fortune, understanding, &c. The greatest inequality in intimate intercourse is that of the understanding; for this may be felt at every instant.

Friendship is more rare in proportion to elevation and fortune, because interest makes more hypocrites in sentiment. There are more false friendships; but true ones do not less exist in unequal situations.

There is an affection of reason, and another of instinct; men are under the influence of the latter, and attracted by that which flatters their self-love, and presents them

them advantages. They are innocently mistaken in believing the person to be dear to them, whereas it is mostly the splendour about him, and the power he possesses by which they are captivated. But the person is still beloved on account of the manner in which he enjoys his greatness, and of the use he makes of his power. Honest men are deceived by sentiment; but knaves are guided by a rational interest.

If friendship exists, it is perhaps confined to the virtuous: friends must have no difficulty in telling each other every thing, and how it is possible not to conceal something when they have shameful things to reveal?

When our friend is sick we give him our assiduous cares, and are full of inquietude; yet, if his indisposition be but momentary, although ever so painful, we are under no anxiety because we have no apprehensions of losing him. This is one proof to be added to those which manifest the

the love of ourselves and of the advantages in the persons of others.

CHRISIS, in speaking of his fortune, says, he owes it all to Dorcas; he shews the greatest deference in every thing to the opinion of his friend. It is the least I can do, says he, to acknowledge his good services. The gratitude of Chrisis is quoted as a rare model; but he does not tell you that his fortune is the work of an obscure individual. He likes better to owe it to Dorcas, who is a great man and can again oblige so grateful a friend.

The inclination to admire, and the impulsion by which men are led to approach the great, are manifested by the extreme attachment of the people, which is exalted by the most trifling services. Their hearts are full of the most lively affection for the persons of men of distinction; self-love, flattered by their attention, produces attachment and enthusiasm.

It is not, therefore, equality by which  
the



the affections are determined ; on the contrary, inequality is frequently their most active principle, because self-love and vanity are predominant in men.

Love requires a resemblance of character in some respects, and a difference in others ; the invincible attraction of the sexes is founded upon this principle. In friendship, a conformity of taste and a difference of character are equally necessary. Every moral as well as physical union, every perfection in an individual seems as if it were the result of opposite qualities ; goodness is nothing if it be not united to firmness.

There is a portion of self-love in all our sentiments. It is like fire which feeds itself every where, even in the coldest substances. We cannot but acknowledge that in friendship it seeks to be flattered. What friendship would exist after the certainty of a diminution in the opinion of our merits ? but if self-love be mortified by a disadvantageous comparison, it ought to be humiliated

humiliated by an unsatisfactory choice. The necessity of being flattered as well by our friend as in the choice of him, seems to present contradictions; but these are only in appearance. It is in different qualities that a certain necessary superiority must be found, to furnish a particular reason for esteem without rivalry.

Perfect friendship may result from a connection between two persons distinguished by different merits. For this reason friendship is never more affectionate, sensible and durable, than between a man and a woman. In such an union, it is that we can praise with pleasure and admire without effort; the mind and character mutually soften and fortify each other. Sensibility animates what reflection had almost exhausted. The habitude of deference on one part, and a certain reserve on the other, set bounds to familiarity, prevent the languor which proceeds from unrestrained enjoyment, and continue the desire of pleasing and interesting. Finally, in friendship as well as in love, men are  
happy

happy with women both by what they have and what they have not.

It is possible to write for and against friendship; and, with more or less eloquence, attack or defend its existence: but there is one true principle to go upon, and perhaps the question has not yet been fairly stated.

Friendship is the result of natural disposition, a susceptible heart and a generous mind.

Mutual love requires an interesting object, in common, without rivalry.

Men are capable of loving certain things more than life. Republicans prefer the public weal to glory, riches, or existence. Certain monarchs have inspired their subjects with an enthusiastic love for their persons, and it is a known fact, that at the death of the emperor Otho several citizens, whom his loss had driven to despair, put an end to their lives.

In



In times of trouble and faction, there are found many examples of courageous and durable friendship, because friends are animated by the same interest, which in some degree confounds their persons with the object by which their imaginations are inflamed.

From these short reflections it may be concluded, that the influence of government is extreme upon our sentiments and affections. Institutions, which teach men to sacrifice their private interests, and to prefer moral objects to all others, prepare susceptible minds for affectionate attachments, and as in such governments morals are pure, and men not repeatedly fatiated with sensual enjoyments, the mind seldom loses any part of its vigour.

But in an age when personal interest predominates, and physical pleasures are the general objects of desire, there are few or no real friendship, no sincere affection nor true patriotism; there is

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no

no profound or durable sentiment in the mind.

All I have said against friendship is applicable to the vanity, levity and deceit of modern times, and of the age in which I live. But is man capable of real friendship? This cannot be denied; it is clearly demonstrated by a perfect knowledge of the human heart and of the influence of governments.

## OF WOMEN AND GALLANTRY.

HE who has been loved by a delicate, affectionate and sensible woman, and one endowed with exquisite sensibility, has enjoyed the most delicious pleasure which life affords.

Woman is less personal than man; she speaks less of herself than of her lover; man speaks more of himself than of his amour, and of his amour than of his mistress.

What greater happiness can the imagination offer to a man than the society of a being whose ambition is to please him, whose pleasure is in a certain resistance, and whose happiness is in yielding, who



pretends to his esteem by combating, and to his heart by defeat.

A woman among savages is a beast of burden, in the East a piece of furniture, and in Europe a spoiled child.

More women have fallen by vanity than by inclination and sensual desires. In an intercourse where personal advantages are to determine, rank, dignities and grandeur incline the balance. Success may in general be expected with women by descending a degree: the prince with women of quality, and the lord with the wives of professional men, or those of financiers\*. Women of sensibility are not seduced by these advantages.

There are women celebrated by their gallantry, who have never had an equal for a lover. A man of their own rank, with all the advantages of mind and per-

\* The reader will kindly recollect that France is the scene of action. T.

son,

son, would in vain aspire to please them: dignities, titles and decorations are necessary for the speedy ruin of their reputation. A husband said to his wife, I permit you to intrigue with every body except princes and lackeys. He was right; the two extremes dishonour by the scandal which accompanies them.

Men who hold great places, and those who have distinguished appointments in provinces, find many women less scrupulous than they would be to men of inferior rank. Vanity has its influence in every thing\*, even in the most lively pleasures: how greatly are the senses of women indebted to this passion †.

I am

\* Madame de Sevigne in speaking to her daughter of her son's illness, which was the consequence of an intimate connection with a lady whom he had seen seated with the queen, thus expresses herself; "but he is patient, and it is diverting enough that the canopy should spare him those blushes, which, had the misfortune happened upon the rampart, would have covered him with confusion."

† A great lady, at the age of sixty, had an ob-

I am of opinion that women of gallantry may be thus appreciated. In a hundred there are ninety who are determined by splendour, exterior appearance, fashion, interest, idleness, or the want of something to engage their attention; six by sensibility, and four who are governed by imperious passions.

Praise, admire, be astonished in ecstasy, and fear not to carry flattery and enthusiasm too far with women; make her, from whom you wish to obtain condescension believe, if you can, that she is a particular being, nearer to an angel than to a woman. You will be believed—what do I say, you will not have created an illusion as strong as that of her self-love, and nothing can be refused a man endowed with such exquisite discernment.

secure young man for her lover. She said to one of her female friends: *a dutchess is never more than thirty years of age for a commoner*, and she judged right.

How



How many strange things does a woman, who had appeared reserved, reveal to her lover when once she has made him happy ! How many times has she been upon the point of yielding ! What knowledge does she possess of the most secret mysteries of love ! She is no stranger even to the tongue of debauchery. Love is the whole employment, the sole concern of woman. Nothing escapes their active and penetrating curiosity.

It seems to be permitted to treat women more lightly in proportion to their elevation. The woman in the city attaches more consideration to polite attention, because by her situation she has less right to expect it. The rank of a woman of quality is too decided to leave her the least inquietude upon that which is due to her. She receives pleasure even from a momentary forgetfulness in others of who she is, and this to her is another proof of the excess of passion and ardour of desire.

There is a degree of disorderly conduct and wickedness in gallantry, which can nowhere be met with but in the person of a woman of elevated rank. She knows that audacity astonishes, and that there is nothing which a woman of superior understanding, added to high birth, may not risk. But woe to the woman in the city who should wish to follow her steps; she would fall into the mire of public contempt.

Violent men subjugate women as soon as they have obtained their favours. These love to be governed because they have self-love, which, joined to the timidity of their sex, makes them find a certain pleasure in the fear produced by new emotions; moreover, they attribute violence to an excess of passion. Thus they return to the situation wherein nature had placed them, in a submission to the will of man.

The surest means of being loved by a woman is not to discover to her your whole  
whole

whole affection. She must be made to fear and desire, and to believe she has a rival which will excite her self-love and make her hope for a triumph.

The most intimate friend of a woman is not half so much beloved as the confidant of her amour.

The soft intercourse of a quarter of an hour between two persons of different sexes, and who have, I will not say an affection, but a mutual inclination for each other, establishes a confidence and a tender interest which ten years of the warmest friendship has never yet produced.

In most connections, decorated with the name of love, the man is in general more sincere than the woman, because he has always desires if he has not sentiments. The woman frequently yields without one or the other.

Self-



Self-love is generally predominant in the inclinations of women, and physical sensations in the attachment of men.

Many falsehoods are related of women, but they have but a feeble compensation in truths, which are unknown.

What woman can boast of the power of resisting the emotions of the senses, and the instances of a man who is agreeable to her, added to opportunity. The most virtuous is she who has not ceased to be so because one of these circumstances was wanting.

The most virtuous woman is favourably disposed towards the man who is sensible of her beauty, and the greatest hypocrite to those whom she leads into temptation\*.

A secret

\* Brantome relates, that a beautiful and virtuous woman, one day making her valet de chambre draw on her stocking, asked him if he felt no temptation.

The

A secret defect is a sure guarantee of virtue. The last degree of love is to love the defects of a mistress.

It is not rare to find women who do not grant the least favour, that of which love is the excuse, and the value of mutual happiness, but who procure pleasures without partaking of them, and by which they are degraded\*. They do worse than if

The valet, from a motive of respect, answered in the negative. The lady suddenly lifted her hand and gave him a slap in the face: go, said she, I give you your dismissal, you are no better than a fool.

It is reported, that a great princess of the last century was flattered by the desires with which she inspired her pages, and gave them money to go and extinguish elsewhere the flame she had created.

\* Mademoiselle de Vandôme behaved so to the cardinal de Retz, as the cardinal himself relates.

" I went with her to *Anet*. However, I did not go to every place; she had prescribed herself bounds which she never would pass. I went very far, but was stopped in my course by her marriage.

MEMOIRS DE RETZ. tom. i. p. 73.

they

they did more, and think this gives no power over them.

The birth and rank of a woman, her connexions, acquaintance and magnificence, produce upon most men a greater effect than beauty; they mistake the smoak of vanity for the flame of love.

Interest contains so active and subtil a poison, that affection, the moment it is joined to it, is corrupted, and at length extinguished.

The ardour of sentiment, be it ever so strong, may be increased by fame, success and celebrity.

There are women whose supineness and goodness of heart are incompatible with constant rigour. They have neither strength to resist nor courage to refuse. It cannot be said they yield; they suffer themselves to be prevailed upon.

To



To separate two metals, the intervention of a third, which has a greater affinity with one of the two, is necessary. The separation of lovers is much upon the same principle. In general there is no complete rupture, but when another object has made an impression either upon the lover or his mistress.

It frequently happens that he who is in despair at the idea of losing his mistress, wants but little courage to enable him to leave her.

People in the country, and those who know not the world, believe that all wanton women become so by their sensual passions, and that every man in place is open to pecuniary corruption.

The woman most interested in secrecy, passes lightly over indiscretions produced by excess of passion.

That which shocks women most in the temerity of men, is the idea that their enterprises

terprises are determined by an opinion of their facility. But if passion be the excuse, there is no audacity which a woman does not secretly pardon.

Wanton women are accustomed to defend their ground obstinately; they know the value of every favour, and can stop when they please. A virtuous woman knows not how to calculate, and thinks herself conquered by the least advantage gained over her.

A woman, wanton from coquetry, is accustomed to repel the least approach of sensibility. She is envious, false, and hypocritical from the necessary habitude of deceitfulness. In a connexion wherein self-love is the only sentiment, its explosion must produce tempests; nothing can contain a woman whose only desire is success, at the expence of every one about her.

The actor upon the theatre gives an idea of degradation, when we reflect that

that a man ceases to be himself, takes a character which is not natural to him, adopts sentiments he does not feel, and becomes a machine for the amusement of others. The coquette, like the actor, is in the habitude of changing her own character for one conformable to the momentary part she has to fill. She can imitate the accents of passion, and act the violence of love and ecstasy; she smiles without satisfaction, and shed tears without being affected; there is not a muscle of her face of which she knows not the effect, or cannot direct the movement. Vicious without excuse; her vanity alone is gratified by the disorder of her conduct; and although there be nothing real in her enjoyments, she is insatiable and knows not where to stop. She resembles the tub of the Danaïdes.

There are fine women without celebrity, and others who are considered handsome without pretensions to beauty. Every thing depends upon their manner  
of



of entering the world, and upon the part they have taken up.

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CHARACTER OF A WOMAN WITHOUT  
PRETENSIONS.

ISMENE is an extraordinary beauty; her figure is noble, candour is painted in her countenance, and grace and simplicity reign in her manners and person. The birth of Ismene, and her riches, joined to so many natural advantages, seem likely to engage general attention. Nobody speaks of the beauty of Ismene or praises her charms; you find her in a circle and are surprised she is not distinguished: you compare her with those who are the general subjects of conversation. How many celebrated women you naturally exclaim, are inferior to her. Ismene  
loves

loves her husband, and is attached to her duty; she partakes with moderation of the amusements proper to her sex and age, and follows the fashions without being ridiculous. She has no lover, because the most audacious would despair of corrupting her. Ismene has never hung out the sign of beauty, and beauty itself is not successful without being announced, accompanied with fawning and pretensions.

GLYCERA is the object of ardour to the most fashionable young men. When a pretty woman is spoken of, her name is immediately mentioned. If a supper be announced, notice is given that she will be there. If a young man begins the world with great advantages, it is to Glycera that his secret wishes are directed. If a ball or breakfast be proposed, Glycera has a week's previous invitation. In fact, these parties are made for her. Who is that woman seen on horseback at Vincennes, surrounded by English or French, bent after the man-

Q

ner

ner of the English upon their horses? It is Glycera; or at the Champs Elisées, in so elegant a carriage, and accompanied by young men of the greatest distinction, anxious to be perceived by her, and who think themselves honoured by a glance of her eye? It is still Glycera. Artists seem to have striven who should multiply her most. She figures at the exhibition in portraits, busts, and medallions. She daily receives charming verses expressive of the homage of their author. You, perhaps, have never seen this celebrated lady, and may suppose her charms to surpass those of every woman with whom you are acquainted. At last you meet her; she is not handsome, but it must be confessed she is pretty; she is not young, she verges upon her fortieth year. There is nothing remarkable in her figure, it has some defects, even her understanding is not above mediocrity. Glycera was determined to be handsome, spoken of, and celebrated; her dress is elegant, she gives hopes, throws out allurements, and heightens desire. Twenty years ago she made herself a  
handsome



handsome woman without beauty, as a man constitutes himself a wit without the aid of understanding, by a little art and much address.

A woman who is wanton from a tenderness of heart, or the ardour of the senses, yields to the impulsion of nature. She has an end to attain. She may have openness of mind, and her sentiments may be real. She feels imperious desires, and the moment these are satisfied, she enjoys the fulness of real happiness. Her whole attention being directed to one object, she may feel the inquietude [of jealousy, but not the torments of envy; such a woman may be good, easy, and indulgent, and the sensibility of her heart may conciliate love and friendship.

Believe every thing, and believe nothing about the virtue of women. If you are told that the lively Doris, who gives herself such airs of levity, has never had a lover, be not surpris'd; a thousand examples would confirm it. You are in-

formed that Belifa, whose manner is so modest, and whom the tongue of calumny has hitherto spared, is decidedly wanton; that an obscure man, her house steward, her valet de chambre——Be not in haste to cry out scandal.

HERMIONE is every where furrounded by adorers; each is anxious to be more happy than his rivals; she is prodigal of her allurements, to retain some and encourage others. A lover favoured in appearance soon finds himself no better treated than another who was in despair. Hermione, it is said, loves not any body; she is a coquette, who has no sensations nor desires. You are deceived, ye adorers of Hermione: she loves; but whom? say you; is it young Theodore, whose youth and person seem to presage success? or Alcidon every where well received, and so celebrated by several well known adventures? or Miramis, whose wit supplies the want of birth and person, whose acquaintance does honour to a woman, and seems to rank her with Aspasia? or——

stop;

stop;—not one of them, nor of those you can mention——He is a man without the least advantage of mind or person, who is not young, but whose constitution is robust. It is on his account that she but seldom sups from home, and when this happens that she retires early; it is with him she laughs at her followers, at the hopes of rivals, &c.——It is —— you are impatient——her husband.

DORANTE is jealous and watches his wife. He finds her in conversation with a young man whose polite attentions give him suspicion. He asks the porter if his wife was that day at home to her friends, and the man shews him a list of ten persons to whom she was not to be denied. Is it possible that Dorante should now be uneasy?—He does not know that these people are some of them at Versailles, others in the country, and the rest ill, or had been at his house the preceding evening, and not likely to repeat their visits so soon. This is an old trick which always succeeds.

Q 3

A wo-



A woman, warm in her friendships, has the appearance of a woman of gallantry, yet it sometimes happens that she has never known what it is to love.

Goodness of heart, and mediocrity of person and understanding, may preserve a woman from detraction and calumny, and conduct her through a life of pleasure to a respectable old age.

MELITIA, in her youth, often heard speak of love; curiosity inclined her to a personal experience of the charms of that passion, and from indolence she quickly yielded to the first advances that were made her. She soon found herself abandoned, but did not on this account give herself up to the violence of rage; she took another lover with the same indifference as she would have changed her gown. From the habitude of gallantry, she took a third and a fourth; the succession afterwards became so rapid that she counted them no longer. Jealousy never made so mild

mild and peaceable a woman commit an imprudence. Her letters were never shewn because she wrote badly; moreover a correspondence was not altogether compatible with her indolence. She never let her lovers languish, which was the most certain means of obtaining her end without being exposed. Her quarrels were never public; and thirty lovers, who had quitted her, remembered her with pleasure; they still shewed her an attachment and formed her a circle of friends. They were never inclined to boast of her favours, nor excited to censure her from a resentment of her proceedings. Each knew the agreeable facility of her virtue. Melitia was never the subject of public conversation, because all her adventures were private. The succession of her lovers was so rapid that her husband had never time to fix his suspicions: he believed her virtue to be unspotted. Thus did Melitia pass twenty years in the pleasures of love without injuring her reputation, and the most scrupulous mother left her daughters in her company.

ELVIRA is now in the fifty-first year of her age. Her life, until within these few years, has been a chain of amorous adventures, but lately she has been forsaken, and is at present overwhelmed with languor.

All her resentment consists in saying, that men are no longer polite. What lover will take Elvira? Will she become a tutorefs and amuse herself in forming a young man honoured by her choice of him? Will she hold him in her chains by presents? No—Elvira is attached to a man of seventy-five, who has passed sixty years of his life in intrigue, in taking and leaving women, and being left by them. They have taken a little house, to which this amorous couple nightly repair with the greatest mystery. Two chairmen carry the heavy dowager, and two others support the gallant invalid. In this manner they arrive in an enchanted closet. What pleasure has Elvira? The most flattering one to her, that of becoming young again, and of being treated by her old man as a giddy



giddy young girl. What a child you are, says he to her, let me see no more of your follies!—She then repeats her childish manners. Elvira is ruining herself for this lover, and yet thinks she pays not too dear for the shadow of her happy days.

It is difficult to imagine what qualities are most proper to gain a man the favours of women. It seems, upon first consideration, that agreeableness of person, wit, and exterior advantages, are most likely to be successful; but several men have distinguished themselves in this painful and brilliant career without being remarkable either for their person or understanding\*.

There

\* The duke of Lauzun was short and ugly, yet no man was ever more famous in gallantry either by the rank or number of his conquests. The queen of Portugal and her sister mademoiselle d'Aumale, equally smitten with the duke, cast lots which should marry him. They agreed, that to give him a considerable fortune, she to whom the issue should be unfavourable,

There is scarcely a romance which has not been more or less prejudicial to morals, by seducing descriptions and charms of style.

In admiring the wit and style of some authors of novels, we cannot but regret the use they have made of their talents. With what art and address for seduction does Richardson arm Lovelace! Of what lively imagination does he give proofs! What resources! In what a labyrinth of intrigue does he engage his hero, and how ably does he withdraw him from it! But to what end are all these powers directed?

favourable, should take the veil, and give her whole property to the other. There is, perhaps, nothing more flattering in the annals of gallantry. Mademoiselle, sister to the king of France, wished to marry him publicly, and this passion, by its ardour, added to the subsequent coldness of her lover, rendered her life unhappy. The duke of Lauzun had received the favours of women whom he had disputed with the king. Mademoiselle agreed that he wrote inelegantly, but always concluded by observing, that his manner was very *extraordinary*; this it seems is what pleased her most in her lover.

To

To conduct a war? To determine the fate of a nation, or balance the interest of a quarter of the world? By no means. What then?—To seduce a young girl and bring her by degrees to yield to his desires, which he knows how to command, and render subordinate to the caprice of self-love. It is in vain to pretend that such a work, or those of the same kind, generally very inferior to *Clarissa* in talent and imagination, have a moral tendency, although concluded by a catastrophe which is the punishment of the seduction and crime. The heroes of vice are presented throughout the whole work with such brilliancy of colouring, they unite so many advantages and are crowned with such flattering success, as to create an interest much in their favour. The writer furnishes them with pleasantries upon virtue which render it ridiculous; their descriptions heat the imagination, inflame the senses, and fill virtuous persons even with the most romantic ideas, which they strive to realize. Young persons struck with the rare qualities of *Lovelace* are



are more seduced by the brilliancy of his success than intimidated by his tragical end: Women persuade themselves they shall make a better choice than Clarissa, and be able to stop upon the brink of the precipice. Women have as much charity for the heroine of romance as certain persons for the vices and weaknesses of great men, and because there is some resemblance in the deformed part of their mind, they think the comparison may be general. In reading the conspiracy against Venice, we are, without interiorly acknowledging it, in some measure disposed to wish that magnificent city may be burned, and the citizens massacred, because the mind regrets the failure of well-concerted measures, and the sacrifice of such brave conspirators. The greatest villains in gallantry have also something which interests in their favour; we see not the misfortunes of their victims as we lose sight of the conflagration of Venice. The mind of the reader is most struck with the boldness of the enterprize, the difficulties of the conquest, and the  
ability

ability of the seducer. What a desirable end for self-love is that which in gallantry it calls conquest! A woman is either invaluable or not worthy of more consideration than a thousand others. Perhaps no woman is invincible when an artful man, who never loses sight of his object, and is seconded by opportunity, surrounds her with snares. Self-love and the senses combat on his side, and he besieges a place betrayed by the governor and the troops. Is it worth while to descend to falsehood, to exhaust the imagination in combining projects of deceit, and to employ time which is precious, to obtain, after a thousand attacks, the favours of a woman whom we do not love?

The imagination of women once raised by the publication of an adventure, inclines them to a man without merit. Afterwards, like a statuary, they throw incense upon the idol they have created.

There are some kinds of persons lost in society, like certain species of fish, which, after

after having abounded on the coasts, disappear for centuries. In fact, there are no longer those fops, those transcendant coxcombs which always took the lead, gave laws upon dress and fashion, subjugated women, and awed men to silence by audacity and success, and whose manners youth in general were so eager to copy. Such were Vardes and Lauzun. There is a fatuity in men because presumption more or less predominates. But the coxcomb in one society is often a modest man in another; to perform this part in a distinguished manner, he must have exterior advantages united to wit and imprudence, and a certain degree of rank. However vicious the employment of the talents of coxcombs may be, there are certainly still many of them; but models of this kind, as well as of many others, are wanting.

Men of gallantry by profession begin to be out of fashion; the extreme liberty of society, which makes obstacles disappear, diminishes the ardour of desire and the value of the conquest. It weakens the  
desire



desire of pleasing and destroys gallantry. Young men who enter the world, seduced by the reading of novels, and excited by the recital of the amorous adventures of the preceding generation, are anxious to try their merit by some enterprize. Indolence soon retains them in the same chains which habitude strengthens; there are many connexions wherein nothing of marriage is wanting, not even the languor of an uniform life. There are fewer balls, entertainments, and occasions proper to awaken vanity and offer it triumphs. A taste for easy pleasures still contributes to deprive women of a crowd of adorers.

Polydor is famous for his brilliant adventures, and, in some societies, he is called Lovelace; for each quarter of the town has its petty Lovelace. Two women have been confined on his account, and they expiate in a convent the pleasure of having been the objects of his attention. This may give a favourable idea of his agreeableness and figure. The other day I met  
this

this famous conqueror; his person is ordinary, and his conversation most insipid. What then is the principle of his success? He addressed himself either by accident or design to two weak heads, which the least effort was sufficient to turn; he profited by their indolence and want of circumspection, and a thousand others in his place would have had this calamitous and scandalous advantage. Polydor is in gallantry what a man who should insult known cowards would be in bravery; but he has dishonoured two women, and his conquest will tempt others who are seduced by the brilliancy of his success.

Gallantry to love is as politeness to social virtues, its imitation and supplement.

Women, who are past the age of pleasing, know not how to fill up the void they feel in their pleasures. Their imagination is obscured by the vapours which  
arise

arise from inactivity of mind and the languor of the soul \*.

\* It has been remarked that, at a certain age, more women of the great world perish than in any of the inferior classes. The reason undoubtedly is, that in the former the natural change in the constitution is joined to the bitter mortification of being no longer loved, and to all the lassitude of an indolent life.



1998

WIT AND NOBELS

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# DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

## A PHYSICIAN AND A LADY.

---

AS far as I can judge, madam, by your manner, dress, and language, you are rich, of distinguished rank, and have lived in the great world.

Yes, Sir.

PHYSICIAN.

You appear to be about thirty-eight years of age?

R 2

LADY

LADY.

Thereabout.

PHYSICIAN.

I am not particular about age, because I do not recollect ever to have seen a woman exactly forty years old.

LADY (*with a smile.*)

I am not far off.

PHYSICIAN.

As it is necessary I should be perfectly well informed of your situation, you must acquaint me with every thing, that I may judge of what affects you most. You are married without doubt?

LADY.

I was married at sixteen.

PHYSICIAN.

Your husband, madam, excuse my curiosity, does he live happily with you?  
Are



Are you mistress of the house, as I imagine by your eyes and the independence which appears in your manner?

LADY.

We have always lived peacefully together, and my husband treats me with complacency, as I do him.

PHYSICIAN.

I understand; I know what the complaisance of a Parisian husband means. It is his subjection, and frequently his being a cypher.

LADY.

You carry things too far, sir.

PHYSICIAN.

Have you children? and how old are they?

LADY.

I have a daughter fifteen years of age, and a son fourteen.

R 3

PHY-

## PHYSICIAN.

I suppose your daughter is in a convent, your son at an academy, and that you see them but seldom, dissipated as you are by the pleasures and duties of society.

## LADY.

I love them; but, it is true, I do not often send for them home, for fear of injuring their education.

## PHYSICIAN.

At present, madam, I am ready to hearken to the particulars of your complaint,

## LADY.

You must know, sir, that my nerves were always delicate, and subject to the most violent agitation. For the last two or three years they have become more irritable, and I am overwhelmed with vapours. I shed tears, I know not for why, and feel myself interiorly suffocated. I do

do not sleep well, and my digestion is bad.—

PHYSICIAN.

In such a state, madam, you must feel a void, a languor, which renders those things insipid which formerly pleased you most.

LADY.

Exactly so, sir.

PHYSICIAN.

Society has no longer the same charms; the vapours tarnish every object.

LADY.

Vapours apart, sir, there is not in society that decency and animation, that gallantry, which, although not very old, I have formerly seen in men. It seems that manners are quite changed, and at present nothing is more rare than politeness, even in people of the most distinguished rank.



## PHYSICIAN.

You would surprife me, madam, were I not accuftomed to the diverfity of opinions, and to confider the caufe. A few days ago I faw a lady who came from Paris, and boasted of the charms of fociety, the excellence of the ton which reigns there, and of the wit, manners, and politeneſs of the men.

## LADY.

Some giddy young woman who has not yet had time to form her judgment, and, for want of experience, is delighted with every thing ſhe fees.

## PHYSICIAN.

I fuppoſe, madam, you have been adviſed to go to Spa?

## LADY.

Yes: I drank the waters two ſeaſons without effect, and am now determined to travel.

PHY-

## PHYSICIAN.

There is one necessary and important question which greatly embarrasses me. You will excuse the liberty, madam—— You have undoubtedly a susceptible heart?

## LADY.

I understand you, sir——you see me familiar with Mr. ——, and you think——

## PHYSICIAN.

No, madam, Mr. —— is your friend, that is all, I immediately perceived it.—— You have undoubtedly had attachments of another kind? I pretend not to suspect your virtue, but we are not always masters of our heart.

LADY (*smiling.*)

Well, sir, I leave all to you: since you are so penetrating, conclude in what manner you please.

PHY-

## PHYSICIAN.

I observe, madam, that your countenance is become enlivened, and your complexion more bright.

LADY (*with an air of modesty.*)

Your questions may well produce surprise and emotion. But, finally, what think you of my situation?

## PHYSICIAN.

I think, madam, I have discovered your complaint.

LADY (*with vivacity.*)

Has it a name?

## PHYSICIAN.

Yes, madam, I have given it one—That of forty years; because, at this age, it generally appears accompanied with the same symptoms; it attacks rich women, they who have lived in the great world, and more especially the beautiful and agreeable.

You



You know, madam, there are complaints particular to every state and profession, to painters, pewterers——

LADY.

But do you cure this complaint of mine?

PHYSICIAN.

Discovering the cause and the symptoms is doing a great deal, were it only to prevent the taking of medicines. I can almost promise you a cure, provided you will make use of your reason; be patient and suffer me to direct you. No state is so cruel as that of uncertainty, in this situation we are constantly between hope and fear. Forget the past, consider the future resources, substitute permanent desires, easy to be satisfied, to passions which disturb the mind without attaining their object.—Collect yourself, depend less upon exterior objects, and be more attached to knowing than feeling. Distinguish vanity from what is called sentiment, that you may have less consideration for the latter.

Consider

Consider that our attachments are but an employment of time, and may be replaced by any other occupation; finally, endeavour to find in public consideration a recompence for momentary and frivolous success. These, madam, are in general the means of cure I have to offer you. A lady who has been left by her lover, and is in a most frightful state of mind, now waits for me. In our first conference I will administer to you the general remedies I have indicated.

---

There is a degree of love which inspires an unbounded confidence, incompatible with jealousy, in the object beloved.

Reason can do nothing against sentiment. Hence it is that the common place expressions of love, repeated for two thousand years with protestations and oaths, always

always produce effect. A woman in love will always tremble for fear her lover, in a moment of despair, should stab himself in her presence.

In youth we love with all our might,  
in age with all our weakness.



## OF A MAN REALLY IN LOVE.

A MAN really in love is less enterprising than he who seeks but to satisfy his vanity or desires. The reason of this is not difficult to perceive. It is necessary to know the nature only of the sentiment by which he is animated. Love reigns in the soul, heart and senses; it is the dominion of an object over all our faculties, and consists in an exclusive preference taken by surprise rather than given. He who is really smitten knows not what pleases him most in the person he loves: there is nothing which he distinguishes in his affection. He loves before he knows or even supposes it; it is the confusion and disorder excited by the presence of the beloved object, rather than his desires, that discovers the empire of the blind deity. The mind of a lover is absorbed and almost extinguished by sentiment.

His

His thoughts and expressions come not thence, but from the soul. All his movements are confused. He falters, stops, is silent, and reddens, as when excited by immoderate anger. Such is the character of love.

And in the soft transports wherein his soul is lost,  
He can find neither language nor voice.

He who wishes to seduce has but one aim. He sees the woman he desires, as a sportsman does his game. He watches her motions, and follows her through all her windings; he seizes a moment of weakness, triumphs, and often insolently enjoys his victory. Love, as I have observed, reigns in the soul, and fills the heart with tenderness. The property of this sentiment is to interest him who feels it in the happiness of another. Therefore the most trifling resistance is sufficient to alarm him whom love has subdued; he thinks he is going to lose for ever the object of his affection. The soul has a thousand enjoyments which retard and  
suspend

suspend desires. The woman whom we love has a thousand favours to grant, each of which is inestimable. A man aspires to the entire possession of such a woman, but wishes to enjoy only her whom he desires, and has always sufficient presence of mind to profit by a favourable moment. When we love we are no longer masters of ourselves: every thing betrays us, because there are no bounds to our uneasiness and inquietude. Hence comes the difficulty of concealing a rising passion, and that awkwardness, timidity, and embarrassment by which it is accompanied. The man who is passionately in love knows not what he most desires: he is like a house covered with flames; nobody knows where to begin, in preference, to extinguish the fire. He cannot be happy alone, he seeks neither to triumph nor enjoy, but to confound his existence with that of the woman he loves. One instant, one desire must unite them, and in some degree they must find themselves at the pinnacle of happiness without having foreseen it.

By



By what means can we be certain that we are really loved? Most of the symptoms of love are equivocal. Your lover is jealous, Hortensia. Self-love is sufficient to excite all the furies of jealousy. You perceive no abatement in his desires. Hence it may be concluded that his passions are strong. He is constantly with you. The power of habitude may determine his assiduity. His eyes are suffused with tears when he speaks to you of his tenderness. Good actors can shed them in abundance. His letters are full of sentiment and warmth of expression. The contents of those of poets and novel writers seem to burn the paper. There is perhaps one means of judging of the truth of his sentiments. In your long conversations, does he speak more of you than of himself?

The imagination of many persons, especially of women, performs the functions of the heart and physical senses; their heads are heated with the idea of an object, whilst their tormented senses are still, and their cold and empty heart feels no tenderness.

S

This

This false passion may be durable by the aid of habitude.

Nothing is more flattering and affecting, to a man in love, than the combat of sentiment and modesty.

He who loves without a return of affection is the most certain of loving truly.

A man passes all his time with his mistress—his wife dies; he is looked upon as happy in being at liberty to pursue his inclination, and having the power of uniting himself to the object of his affections. But if this man, who is accustomed to go from home every day at four o'clock, should marry his mistress, where then will he have to go to at that hour?

## FRAGMENT OF A LETTER.

YOU pretend it is difficult to know me ; yet I have always presented myself to you such as I really am, and it is your own fault if you have not been able to see into my heart. I am, say you, an enigma ; be it so : the word of this enigma is *woman* ; I am, indeed, a true one. I have a lively imagination, but little ardour of sentiment ; a heart susceptible of transient emotions, and a great deal of self-love and vanity. With this clew you will find all my secret recesses. I have reflected considerably, notwithstanding my natural air of levity, which I sometimes carry too far. I have endeavoured to discover what passes in the hearts of other women ; and those who have had the most adventures, have confessed to me, they had used every means to excite their passions ; that they had enjoyed but the shadow of pleasure, and that in the continual pursuit of it they had lost



themselves, like those who seek the philosopher's stone, and are ruined by the expence of their experiments. According to my reflections, I thought I should fully gratify my self-love in conceiving no more affection than what was flattering to it; I have always had suplicants, but never insolent subduers. I give them a ray of hope to support them in their painful undertaking of loving me. Each thinks himself more skilful and happy than his rival; but I escape from them, like Protheus, in the moment they expect triumph. I will not conceal from you that, notwithstanding my reflections and able manoeuvres, I have been twice upon the point of yielding. I felt in two private conversations certain emotions which, however, were not turned to my disadvantage. They were transient as a meteor, and I had the pleasure of being revenged for the want of address in my lovers as well as for the power they thought they had acquired over me. These are vain pleasures you will say; but, my dear friend, take vanity from the world and what will remain in it? I maintain, that

that nothing, except hunger, animates men more than vanity. It is a principle a thousand times more active and prolific than love. A few persons, during a short period of their lives, are amused by the latter for some minutes in the day ; but as soon as an infant can speak, he wishes to produce effect ; he will be thought of, and aspires to gain attention. Every hour in the day, at every period of life, both men and women yield to this imperious sentiment. What are the pretensions of heroes, warriors, and ministers, but to gain the attention of men, to be the subjects of conversation throughout a quarter of the world ; to hold those who approach them in a state of dependance, and to produce great effects when they make their appearance ; finally, to see men anxious to serve them, and to anticipate their desires ? I often say to myself on entering the theatre, when my fine complexion, eyes, and figure, with the elegance of my dress, excite general attention ; when men and women turn towards me, I say, on hearing a buzzing of applause, that I have

more power than the most important personages over all who are here; they may be munificent, but their empire is not so great as mine. These act upon the mind only, but the heart and senses are under my dominion. In disgrace their power ceases: their influence is but borrowed: mine is inseparable from my person; the idea of the happiness I can confer cannot be taken from me. Tell me, if I am wrong, in imitating the manner of heroes and ministers, in having, without difficulty, that which costs them years of anxiety, and deprives them of so much repose; lest, in an unfortunate moment, they should be entirely deprived of it? I have been inoculated, no event can deprive me of my place, and I have twelve years certain for the exercise of all my influence. You believe in constancy, and prefer, to all these vain pleasures, the charm of a lasting sentiment. But is there one which can continue for a considerable length of time with all its primitive ardour? Real love is a disease which has several stages: desire, possession, and satiety; these are its three epochas. In vain do  
we



we wish to be constantly attached to the same object. Men are led by curiosity and habitude. One is a steady, the other an inconstant lover. Some are active, others indolent. Constant lovers are men of habitude. A flattering attachment, if that which proceeds from slothfulness can be so. If lovers, who are admired for their steady affection, told you what languor they feel, and how insipid are their enjoyments, you would be disgusted with constancy. Love is extinguished in their hearts, and they are more attached to the apartment of their mistress, to a certain kind of life, and the manner of employing their time, than to the person whom they seem to love. A profound sentiment, ardent and lasting, is a chimera. How is it possible to find that person always amiable who is constantly before our eyes, or to be amused by a conversation which we soon have learned by heart? The most ticklish persons are insensible to the touch of their own hands, because they are habituated to them. Can we command our senses to be incessantly awakened by the approach

of the same object ? A lively and exclusive sentiment, which absorbs the mind and the senses, is the consequence of solitude, which concentrates the mind ; of calmness which gives time to feel lasting impression. Finally, of the rarity of amiable objects which excludes comparison. Can such a sentiment exist in a great city or in a court ? An immense capital offers a rapid succession of objects which prevents profound impressions ; every thing which engages attention wears a seducing aspect ; a thousand beauties dispute each other the preference : men are allured by every thing which is the most attracting, and facility of success diminishes the ardour of desire. They are irresolute, and wander from object to object ; the effect of beauty is destroyed by that of pleasing grace, and this in its turn by that which is bewitching ; they compare, hesitate, and have not time to chuse ; they wish to possess every woman, and love not even one. Men are at balls, comedies, and in society, as in shops, where a hundred pieces of silk are displayed to view ; they know not which to pre-

prefer. You may perceive, that notwithstanding my levity, I have reflected a good deal. I have done more, I have judged, and, for my own happiness, I will depend upon the success of my self-love. I take pleasure in making men feel the torments of Tantalus. It was for some time believed that I was wanton: at present the world does me more justice, and the man, whom I seem to distinguish, cannot be a coxcomb at my expence. Adieu, my dear friend, be not uneasy on my account. When my youth is past, I shall be like a minister in disgrace, with the additional resources of wit, intrigue, and devotion.



## OF THE MIND OF WOMEN.

IT appears that women have not strength enough of mind to attach themselves to things only. They generally join to them a sensible object. Their love or hatred of persons determines their actions, and is joined to all their interests. They attribute not the want of success, in an affair, to circumstances and natural obstacles, but to some person directly or indirectly concerned. Things please them on account of those from whom they come. Prejudice and ardour reign in all their sentiments and actions. The principal objects of their conversation are persons: they speak less of men in general than of one man in particular, whom they analyze and define with astonishing sagacity. When a woman is solicited for her interest and support in favour of an undertaking, she must by no means be told of the obstacles which arise from the nature of the thing,  
or

or the state of affairs. The great art is in profiting by her disposition to love and hatred ; in persuading her that every obstacle proceeds from the opposition of a man in place. In this case a woman acts with vigour and constancy ; she will not hearken to reasons, but is stimulated in proportion to the difficulties she has to encounter ; simple concern becomes a passion, and the success of the affair is no longer doubtful.

You have a great law suit, Dorilas, wherein your fortune and honour are at stake. Justice, you say, is on your side ; your right is so clear that you fear not your adversary. Let us not speak of your right and title. I know the circumstances of your case ; it is more than doubtful ; the strongest appearances are against you ; how do you stand with the enthusiastic Argyra, who has a legion at her command, and whose heads she inflames ?—with the circumspect and ambitious Belinda, who so artfully determines the judgment of several persons in power ?——with the cold  
and

and made up Celimene, who, with an affected warmth, displays such great sentiments, and whose lover has at his orders ten young men who adopt his judgments and revere his decisions—or with Dorinda, whose acquaintance is so numerous, and who in the evening relates, in ten different houses, the history of the day, which she embellishes at will, and not unfrequently composes? In this manner, Dorilas, is public opinion formed. Its influence extends to the judges, to those even of the greatest integrity, whose discernment is obscured by the cloud of general prejudice. Plead and print with these supports; every body will be impatient to read your memoirs, and he who shall dare to doubt of the justice of your cause, or be less warm in your favour than these irritable persons whose interest is so powerful, will be declared a man without principles. People must declare for you, it will not only be fashionable in the eyes of the world but necessary to their safety.

Imagination



Imagination is the reigning principle in the mind of women. For which reason their dictionary is more extensive than that of men. They find relations between the most distant objects. Their comparisons are lively and striking, and render the most abstruse things sensible.

Women seldom search for causes, but predict effects in a prophetic manner. Their fine and delicate conception of mind makes them perceive many circumstances which insure or prevent success.

The science of morality is that in which their mind is exercised with the greatest advantage. They are acquainted both by sagacity and experience with the weaknesses of the heart. That of man is their domain. The most secret pretensions cannot escape them; self-love and vanity have no recesses beyond the reach of their penetration. For which reason they discover and expose to view the most secret foibles; but they discern merit with equal ability. A man of mediocrity ought to tremble  
when

when he appears before a sensible woman.

There is in general but little order in the ideas of women. They see objects under different points of view, and know how to adorn their different aspects with the most brilliant colours. The wit of the most celebrated of the sex sometimes resembles the magic lanthorn; hence a certain disorder, observable in the mind of women of superior understanding, which presents the idea of folly.

PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN OF SUPERIOR  
WIT AND UNDERSTANDING\*.

ELMIRA has, to a superior degree, the gift of thinking, the most lively conception, the most penetrating sagacity, and brilliant imagination are the reigning qualities of her mind. Thought seems to be the essence of Elmira, wholly destined to the exercise of the intellectual faculties. I will not undertake to point out what belongs to her character, or to describe the qualities of her heart: these divisions of a thinking and sensible being exist not in her: wit alone constitutes her heart, mind, character, and senses. Madame de Tencin said one day to Fontenelle, in putting her hand upon his heart, *they are brains which lie there.* All the actions and sentiments of

\* This is the only portrait in the work, and is advantageous to the lady. She died a few years ago.

Elmira



Elmira may be called imagination. Every thing with her is submitted to the thought of the moment: if her imagination describes the charms of love, she feels this passion, and her mind, which in an instant decorates an object with the most brilliant qualities, seems to create her a heart and affections. The same active, restless mind, desirous of a general and perfect knowledge of every thing, destroys its own work; the magical charm disappears and she immediately becomes inconstant. She is susceptible of all the errors of youth, because her mind has never been matured, and yet composes her whole being; it has the most rapid movements, and its first flight is like an arrow swiftly shot from a bow, and which speedily reaches the most distant mark. Elmira has but little information, and is incapable of solid reflection; all her thoughts are momentary, never retrospective, nor relative to the future. Her life is a long youth, unenlightened by experience; her mind resembles the chariot of the sun abandoned by Phaeton. Her lively penetration serves her

her instead of knowledge, because by it she speedily possesses herself of that which exercises the attention of others. She turns over rather than reads a book, and guesses rather than learns. She is acquainted with every thing, her conception is so lively. The most abstracted ideas enter her mind with the same facility as the simplest notions. Her brilliant imagination gives her the power of describing every object, and composes her a particular dictionary. She speaks in such a manner as gives to every thing she says an expressive and a descriptive character. Her conversation is animated, and mixed with brilliant thoughts, just definitions, and ingenious comparisons. She is better to hear than converse with, having no desire to distinguish herself; pretensions are beneath those, who, without effort, possess abundantly. She expends her wit as prodigals do their money, for the pleasure of expending, and not to make a display of it. Elmira must pass for a malicious woman, because she often mortifies the self-love of others;

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but

but the mind alone is the object of her observations ; her criticism is determined more by her natural habitude of comparison and judging than by malevolence of sentiment. Her dissertations are continually upon the mind ; this is her sphere. It is every thing, both in and for El-mira. She could not refrain from revealing a defect, which she should have remarked in that of a man who had saved her life.

PHYSICAL



PHYSICAL SENSIBILITY IS NOT THE ONLY  
PRINCIPLE OF OUR ACTIONS AND AM-  
BITION.

THE ingenious and celebrated author of the book upon *the mind*, has endeavoured to demonstrate, that physical sensibility and personal interest were the determining principles of our actions; he has striven to prove, that physical pleasures \* are the only end of the ambitious man, amidst all

\* "The conclusion of this chapter," says the author, "is, that the desire of greatness is always the effect of fear or pain, or of the love of physical pleasures, in which all others are comprehended."

DE L'ESPRIT, tom. ii. DISCOURS iii. p. 19.

"But amongst polished people it is the vague desire of happiness, which, as I have already proved, is reduced to the pleasures of the senses, which, for the most part, inspire the love of greatness. Now, of these pleasures I have undoubtedly a right to choose that of women, as the most lively and sensible of all."

Tom. ii. p. 26.

the great projects which seem to put them at a distance from him. Examples without reasoning would be sufficient to shew the falsehood of this system. \*The ancient government of Egypt, that of the Persians under Cyrus and some other kings, the republic of Lacedemonium, and the first ages of the republic of Rome, offer to us a very different spectacle, and more honourable to humanity. The elevation to which man can rise by wisdom, and the vigour of institutions, is therein clearly marked. On comparing the ancients with the moderns, we seem to read the history of a different species of beings.

In man there are two distinct and separate existences ; one purely physical, the other moral ; not to see the impulsion of these principles in all our actions is shutting the eyes against light. Each of these existences has its separate wants. They act one upon the other by the harmony which unites them ; but there are actions which result but from one of them only. The savage is wholly concerned about objects  
present

present to him, without reflecting upon the past, or thinking of the future. In him the faculty of thinking is benumbed, and has no more activity than the fire confined in the substance of a flint. Thought seems to be the forbidden fruit; it is from thought that a knowledge of good and evil is derived; it changes the state of a man, and transports him into a new field of pains or pleasures. His ideas are then multiplied; he reflects, compares, and morally exists; self-love, of which it contains the seeds, is developed; a word, a gesture, speaks joy or torment to his soul \*.—He feels the want of being interested and affected, that he may perceive his existence

\* If any thing proves the extreme power of the mental faculties over man, it is what passes within him when his countenance glows with anger. A word or a look discomposes his whole being. These, as sudden in their effects as the action of light, drive the blood from one extremity to the other; it rushes from the smallest capillary vessel to redden his forehead and animate his eyes. So rapid a physical revolution is operated by sentiment and thought in the twinkling of an eye.



in a manner flattering to his self-love. If man be not satisfied, he is seized by a fatiguing languor. To prevent this bodily labour, exercise of the mind, and emotions of the soul are necessary. Human life resembles the lazy beggars, who, in Holland, are condemned to pump water which incessantly gains upon them. The mind and soul have wants peculiar to themselves, and which we constantly strive to satisfy. Men run to the theatre to feel emotions; they play to be agitated by hope and fear. A woman who has no concerns sufficient to engage most of her attention, or the whose passions are in general less ardent, is greedy of amorous intrigues, wherein the heart and senses have frequently no part; whilst she thinks herself in the pursuit of pleasure, it is employment, and the success of self-love, which is the motive of her anxiety. Without feeling the desires she inspires, she is flattered by them, because they prove to her the effect of her power. She is more attentive to the force of sensations in her lover, than anxious to enjoy; and that

that which frequently pleases her most when she abandons her charms, and becomes prodigal of her favours, is the idea of offering treasures to the admiration.

The universal desire of feeling emotions makes men of wit the more sought after. For the most part, it is not for information that others desire to associate with them, but because their mind, habituated to thinking, renders their conversation more animated, and there is something more new and poignant in their expressions than in the insipid prattle of men of the world. Melancholy persons, or those who have but few ideas, are studiously avoided, because they quickly communicate their heavy languor. The poison of the West India islands is not more subtle than the contagious pest with which the tiresome man overwhelms the mind\*. From the same principle, the want of being animated, princes formerly kept

\* This may be judged of by the sympathetic force of yawning.

fools and buffoons about their persons: their extravagant expressions awakened their stupified minds.

It is evident that there exists in man, living in society, a pressing want of being interested, which has nothing in common with sensations. Self-love is equally independent of it, and not less imperious. Ambition is composed of these two elements, and far from presenting any thing physical in its object, it is frequently an obstacle to physical enjoyment. Cæsar loved women, but it was after glory and power\*.

Man

\* A circumstance relative to Helvetius, was the origin of his system upon physical sensibility. He had naturally a strong inclination to women. One day, when a very young man, he was in a public garden, where he observed a man who was surrounded and caressed by several women of distinguished appearance. He felt himself inclined to envy the fate of a person seemingly so happy, and who attracted the attention and regards of such charming women. He asked who he was, and found him to be Maupertuis. From that moment he formed a design of distinguishing himself



Man is happy or unhappy from thinking: thought to the mind is as love to the body. A geometrician feels a delicious pleasure in the solution of a problem. A poet is transported with joy when, in the height of his fancy, he has displayed all the riches of imagination.—Source of pleasure, principle of fecundity—thought extends and perpetuates existence.

Man desires to live in opinion. He is greedy of distinctions which command respect. He loves dominion because he has a will, and wishes it to be accomplished. Madame de Maintenon is a striking proof of the value attached to public opinion, and of the strong inclination we have to appear superior to others. “The desire,” says she, “of having a name, was my

himself by his talents, that he might become the object of that attention which to him appeared so flattering, and which he imagined he could turn to the advantage of his taste for pleasure. It was relative to this manner of being momentarily affected, that he established a general system, contradicted by reason, and the experience of every age.

“passion.”

“ passion.”—No body ever carried it so far. “ This ambition made me suffer martyrdom by a thousand constraints which I put upon myself.”—She shut herself up with a woman who had the small-pox, without being certain she herself had ever had it. “ A little pity,” says she, “ at first inclined me to it, afterwards a strong desire to do a thing which no body else had ever done.”—When emetics were proscribed by an arret, except in the last extremity, she took them without necessity, and afterwards went to make visits. —She wished people to say, Look at that pretty woman, she has the courage of a man. The passion which governed madame de Maintenon, which subjugated all her inclinations and carried her to the summit of greatness, was far from having any thing physical in it : it was like that which raged in the soul of Alexander. The same motive made one conquer Asia, and the other risk her beauty and her life.

The

The enthusiastic republicans mentioned in history, preferred the public good to every other consideration. They loved virtue for itself, as a geometrician or philosopher does truth. In the first ages of republics, in the vigour of their institutions, the love of glory, and the desire of being distinguished, were not the determining principles of true republicans. The idea of moral perfection, and the ardent love of public weal inflamed their souls. They feared not poverty, this appeared honourable to them, even after riches began to be coveted, and luxury had made some progress.

If we wish to know the degrees by which men advance towards corruption, it is easy to determine them in a sensible manner. These gradations must be sought for in republics. Men begin by loving virtue, which is sufficient to itself; afterwards they are desirous of fame; self-love soon corrupts the pure love of virtue: it adds to the pleasure of well-doing, that of doing better than others. There is a third epocha,  
that



that in which grandeur is fought after. This gives birth to ambition. Virtue is no more ; the motive of every effort is to rise above others. Pride, self-love, and vanity reign in the soul of the ambitious man ; but there is something great in his projects which commands the respect of the multitude. He is obliged to have superior talents and great qualities. A taste for voluptuousness, were it predominant, would be an obstacle to his designs, consequently sensual pleasures cannot be the end he proposes. The last degree of corruption, at which men arrive by these gradations, is the love of riches. Virtue and renown are now no more than names : ridicule is thrown upon those who preserve the least remembrance of them. Honours and dignities are no longer desired, except as the means of fortune ; physical enjoyments become the universal aim. Every thing is then calculated by a numerary valuation ; the advantages of great places are stated according to the opinion of what they produce.

It

It will be asked, to what the ambitious man can pretend, if the man loaded with honours, and possessed of great employments, ought not to have a higher opinion of himself in most modern governments? In the first place, it may be answered, that he deceives himself with respect to his talents, and that flattery increases the illusion; secondly, that he is interested, moved, and has a lively sense of his existence, and exercises his will without finding any body to contradict him. His mind is continually captivated by interesting objects which dissipate the languor of weariness. He is heard with a flattering attention, and the confidence inspired him by the attitude of deference and respect, which characterize those who approach his person, give him the enjoyment of his faculties and leisure to develop them. In such a situation the ambitious man is satisfied with himself and with others; and such is the inclination of men to admire every thing elevated, that they always suppose him a certain degree of merit.

The

The man of ambition, far from making the gratification of his senses his sole object, is frequently led by that imperious passion to the annihilation of himself. He sacrifices present enjoyments, his life, even to the vain buzzing of posterity, which he never will hear. How can the love of pleasures or fear of grief be found in such a sacrifice? or how can that sentiment in man, which renders insupportable the idea that his memory will be dishonoured, and, on the contrary, makes the praises of a future age so dear to him, be thus explained? It has been remarked, that it has very seldom happened a man has put an end to his existence merely to avoid pain; it is to shake off the burden of languor, or to avoid contempt that men abridge the number of their days; there can be no greater proof of the triumph of moral over physical existence. The fortitude and cheerfulness of savages in the most frightful torments, shew to what a degree pain is to be subdued, and that the soul may be so exalted as to become almost insensible of it.

It



It will perhaps, be said, that favour, credit, and the pomp of honours will insure to the voluptuous man success with women, inaccessible to the corruption of money. Admitting, for a moment, that this motive may determine an ambitious man, his view would be a triumph of self-love: but experience has taught us, that he who is really ambitious\* is rather a libertine than a lover; he likes better to corrupt than seduce; in this manner he economizes the employment of time which is precious to him. If he attaches himself to women, it is to such as are capable of forwarding his views, and favouring his reigning passion.

The ambition of sovereigns establishes still more clearly, that the principles of this passion have no relation with the desire of physical enjoyments, and that it arises from moral sensibility. History in-

\* His answer might be that of the minister whom a king asked if he made love: No, SIRE, said he, I buy it ready made.

forms us, that Mahomet the Second and Amurat abandoned their seraglios: they tore themselves from the embraces of a thousand women to go and suffer all the fatigues of war. Was voluptuousness their reigning passion? Were the burning deserts they crossed to lead them to a palace of celestial beauties? No; but to victory seated upon bloody spoils. Their senses were calm, and their imagination was inflamed by the passion of fame. Their ears were not struck with the melody of voluptuous music, but with the harsh accents of war, and at a distance they confusedly heard the voice of renown. It was not the temple of love which employed their thoughts, but that of immortality. They were inflamed with the desire of gaining it, although at the expence of their existence, and satisfied with being effaced from the earth to live eternally in the memory of mankind.

Charles the Twelfth, intoxicated with fame, sleeping constantly upon a hard bed, and avoiding women, gives not the idea of a  
man

man whose motive was physical sensibility. Conquest was the only voluptuousness with which he was ever acquainted. The grand pensioner, Heinsius, that frugal republican, an enemy to pomp, and whose household establishment consisted in one servant, felt an extreme pleasure in humiliating the pride of Louis XIV. Love was not to decree him the reward of his labours and renown.

Eunuchs are ambitious, they desire to command, and the enjoyments of love are not the motives of their intrigues. These degraded beings have nothing but hatred for women, in return for the contempt with which they constantly load them.

Women are ambitious as well as men, and more anxious to command. Moral love was created by women, because they perceived that the empire of physical passion was destroyed the moment the senses were gratified. The jargon of gallantry, the metaphysic of sentiment, which is played off between the acts, the enjoyments of self-

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love,



love, all these accessories, which stifle the principal, are of female invention. Women have, in some measure, made man after their own likeness to extend their empire; the delirium of imagination has replaced that of the senses.

In supposing even that a taste for sensual pleasures were equal in women, splendor, power and dignities would add nothing to the means of satisfying it. A voluptuous woman would rather wish to descend from the throne than to ascend it, that she might unmolestedly pursue the bias of her inclinations.

Mary Stewart loved pleasures, and gave herself but little concern about government: the reins of that of Scotland floated in the hands of her lovers. Elizabeth was ambitious, and would be counted amongst the great. There was some coquetry in her character; she was flattered by the desires she inspired, because she was avaricious of every kind of success; but it is a matter of doubt whether or  
not

not love ever triumphed in her person. Was it the love of pleasures which induced her to that constant endeavour to support and extend the royal prerogative?

Several inclinations may accompany ambition; but if this yields to them, it is because it is feeble. Every man has the seeds, and in the course of his life manifests some signs of ambition; but it is abated by indolence, and totally extinguished by the love of pleasures\*.

Most men have a strong desire to be distinguished, and to excel others in certain things; but they frequently make their fame consist in frivolous or whimsical successes. Nero's ambition was to be an excellent singer, he was insensible to

\* It seems, says a moralist, that the devil has placed indolence upon the frontier of several virtues. It may be answered, that it is equally so upon that of several vices.

all praise except that given to his musical talents.

The difference in the kind of ambition proceeds from that of character. In some it is audacious and enterprising; in others indirect, patient and artful.

Man has a pressing and energetic moral want, more or less imperious. For the same reason that there are men whose sensibility is extreme in physical pleasures, there are others whom susceptible self-love, delicate to excess, and the idea of virtue and honour compose happiness absolutely moral. The sphere of their pains and pleasures is totally independant of the senses.



## OF EDUCATION.

MUCH has been written upon education; and, since Rousseau, several authors have trodden in his steps, but they have neither his close logic nor energetic style. What can result from these books, whilst morals are in contradiction to principles? A Parisian supper, the fear of ridicule, and the example of others, destroy in a week the effect of the most enlightened education directed by the best principles.

A preceptor uses all his efforts to incline his pupil to virtue; but no sooner is he taken from under his care, than the company he frequents gives him an intercourse with knaves. In proportion as he advances in years, it is more and more demonstrated to him, that he is fortunate and obtains consideration and success. He had received the precepts of virtue at an age when the study

of them was an obstacle to his amusements : he hearkened to them with indifference. He now has the example of vice when his passions eloquently support its cause.—What becomes of his education ?

A mother or a governess, repeats to a young girl on the point of marriage, that fidelity to her husband is one of the first of her duties. Before she has supped three times in the city she has heard speak of the gallantry of most of the women with whom she lives : these women are considered, quoted and fought after. The books she reads, poetry, prose, and conversation, all speak to her of love and lovers. How is it possible that curiosity alone should not incline her to know what that interesting being is of which the female heart and imagination are full ? How can she preserve, for her husband, an affection which she necessarily conceals, because it is a subject of mockery, and whilst self-love enters into all our sentiments ?

A woman

A woman is respected, her suffrage is solicited, people boast of being admitted into her society, her judgments are laws, and a whole generation has consecrated the consideration she enjoys. Where is the young woman who does not aspire to enjoy, in her declining years, so flattering an existence? She thinks the most prudent conduct is the means of meriting it; she hears a relation of the scandalous adventures of a woman of the same name; and she who is so considered and respected is the woman in question. Her astonishment is extreme!—Is it worth while to constrain myself?—This must be her reflection.

Habitude, vanity, and the love of property are the constitutive elements of paternal love. Few fathers think of the happiness of their children, but all desire their elevation and prosperity.

A son who amasses riches, and acquires dignities and titles, is more regretted than



than he who is the most estimable by his qualities.

A father hides his tenderness from his children whilst they are young, least they should abuse it ; he opposes their inclinations, and finds himself obliged to put on the austere countenance of a master, whilst his heart inclines him to bestow the caresses of a father. The time comes when maturer age approaches them nearer to him ; but the difference of their inclinations separates them again. In general a father sees nothing in his children but beings whose first sentiment for him is fear, which is succeeded by that of indifference.

A son may end his days by the hands of justice, and dishonour his family ; this is the highest misfortune which can befall a father. What happiness has he to expect which may be considered as an equivalent ?

ERASTES

ERASTES says to himself, this great hereditary office, this house, that fine estate, and an immense revenue, will come into my possession at the death of my father. There will no longer be obstacles to my taste and inclination, and I can then lead the kind of life which shall please me best. The father dies—what virtue can be wanting in a son sincerely afflicted? It will, perhaps, be said, that I annihilate the sacred sentiments of nature. It is not nature that I calumniate, but vicious society which I expose to view. All corruption proceeds from our morals, riches and luxury. The constitution of man may be good; but he lives in infected air, which destroys the very seeds of virtue.

Four generations inhabit the vast house of Erastes, opulence reigns in every part of it, and seems to announce that the inhabitants have nothing to desire, and that interest can excite in them no wish but that of mutual happiness.—Stop below stairs and you will see a woman of eighty, decrepit

decrepit and forsaken, and whom her friends and relations sometimes visit for a moment as they pass by : she grieves at the neglect of her children ; and ends, without consolation, her languishing days. Ascend to the first story, and you will find a man of sixty-five, broken and infirm, whose brow is overhung with chagrin, which he strives to conceal ; he walks with precipitate steps in his closet hung with the richest paintings. Upon what are his thoughts employed ? If his mother died he would discharge his enormous debts, and, what is of more consequence to him, augment his collection of pictures. Go up to the second floor, it is inhabited by the son of this man ; he is thirty-five years of age ; he talks with his wife, the subject of their conversation is the state of their affairs. They complain of the cruelty of their father, their creditors are pressing, and their debts increase : your father looks very ill, says the wife, I fear he will not hold out long.—This fear, well explained, means hope.—Your grandmother is very well, adds the wife ; it is to be wished she  
may



may live, for your father would soon expend what she amasses.—This means, that the father may die first; it is very certain the grandmother cannot live long.—Ascend to the third story, where you will see a son of seventeen years of age, who is talking to his valet de chambre of the means of raising money; the father, grandfather, and great grandfather are each in their turn the object of his complaint; their avarice and insensibility are described in the most lively colours; the young man conspires against them all, whilst a relation, lodged in a back room, thinks of the happiness he should enjoy were an epidemical distemper to ravage the house, and carry off the four generations; he is not intent upon this, but his imagination sometimes wanders in the agreeable dream.

A father, become infirm and impatient, cannot conceive the dissipation of a young man who has a passion for pleasures. Their sentiments have nothing in common. Their manner of living is in every  
respect

respect different. The son retires to bed at the hour the father rises. Their tastes are opposite, and their company not the same; their situations even are frequently without affinity to each other. Whatever may be judged from appearances, there can be but little affection between two persons in whose manner and actions there is so little resemblance. Go to the continent of America, you will there see fathers loved by their children: they mutually succour each other. Their pains and pleasures are in common. The son would lose his friend, companion, and firmest support in the death of his father.

## OF THE AMIABLE MAN.

IF we go back to the origin of the word *amiable*, it must signify that which is worthy of being loved. Yet it does not give an idea of what we ought to love, but of something which pleases. The qualities which produce this effect are simply relative, and the amiable man of one age or country resembles not him who is esteemed so in another. Alcibiades was amiable in the eyes of a people inconstant, ardent, and impressed by exterior graces. The duke of Beaufort, vulgar in his language, and who was handsome without dignity, like a man of the lowest class, was the Alcibiades of the market-place. Both of them conformed to the manners of those whom they wished to seduce; each endeavoured to lead them by flattering their inclinations. The character of the  
amiable



amiable man should be flexible, so as to conform to different manners and customs. Nothing ought to make a lasting impression upon him, flexibility and suppleness constitute his being. He must have wit, but not many degrees superior to those with whom he lives ; he must not surprise, but please and enliven. As his proposed end is to amuse, and often to seduce, the man essentially amiable, both in his natural and public character, must be without principles. Were he restrained by the fear of doing an injury, or that of staining reputations, he would be less amusing, and lose a thousand opportunities of flattering human malignity. He must be susceptible of tender concern, without the shadow of affection. His wit must not be accompanied by knowledge, nor his complaisance by benevolence. He must feign all the appearances of friendship, be profuse in the unmeaning expressions of love, and sacrifice every thing to the pleasure of the moment. Such a being exists but in

in a great capital, and perhaps not out of France.

### OF GOOD COMPANY.

IN the last century the expression, *an honest man*, meant that which in the present age is understood by *a man of good company*. St. Evremont, Buffy, Rabin, and other authors, employ it in this sense. The union of circumstances which forms good company, must be sought for in the highest spheres. He who lives with persons who have wit, morals, and an honourable existence, does not see bad company, nor the excellently good; not that which gives the fashion, and forms a kind of aristocracy. It is in these circles that judgment is given, without appeal, upon men in place, authors, and

and different persons, and upon events of every kind. The situations and connections of men in office are no secrets there, no more than amorous intrigues in general, the motives of a rupture, and the successor which a woman gives to her lover. A blind enthusiasm reigns in every mind, and the head is inflamed by a false ardor. Authors, who are protected and well spoken of by good company, obtain a momentary success, often disavowed by the public, but a pension consoles them for such an injustice. Neither genius, wit, nor marked character must be sought after in what is called good company. Those who possess these qualities would be suffered there with impatience, and find themselves misplaced. Great men have never lived in the circles of good company, they appear in them; but the shackles with which a man of superior understanding is loaded, drive him thence into the bosom of his family, to his mistress, or to the society of particular friends; he seeks confidence, and needs not the petty successes of society to assure him of his worth. Certain



tain impostors reign in good company, and ridicule has there its seat of empire. Those who are attached to the world and willing to sacrifice to fortune must appear in this company; and in that case they must possess the art of interesting some woman of intrigue who has a servile troop at her command. But he who can there find amusement, and thinks himself honoured by living in it, bears upon his forehead the stamp of mediocrity.

A man once adopted in one of these societies which lead the fashion, may chuse the character best suited to his disposition; he may be personal, fantastical, trifling, gloomy, choleric, or pedantic; if there be something singular in him, every thing else will be looked over, impertinence even, and other societies will strive which shall applaud his oddities most. Society permits every kind of pretension, provided it be supported by a name or great fortune, or protected by persons who enjoy these advantages. The torrent of dissipation pre-

vents the examination of titles, and those who make bold and frequent attempts may fill what character they please in the world.

CANIDIA awakes in the morning and says to herself—I have wit. She reads the papers, receives the visits of men of wit and information, repeats to one what she has learned from another, forms to herself opinions, and gives a supper. She is extolled, and two years painful flattery of men of celebrity procure her a great reputation. Her wit, unknown for forty years, and of a nature to be so, suddenly breaks out. Canidia is the oracle consulted; her suffrage is solicited, and her decisions pass for laws. A man says I am virtuous; you forget his manner of life, and say, he is virtuous. Another, I am noble and disinterested;—every thing he possesses is the fruit of his intrigues, and you quote his disinterestedness.

A man without merit, or any thing agreeable,

agreeable, is advantageously established in society, where he excels and is imperious. There is no supper to which he is not one of the first who are invited. People complain when they have not seen him : what is the reason of this success ? Thirty years ago a fashionable woman took a liking to him, as she would have done to a dog or a parrot. His own word has been taken for his merit, and he has remained in possession of the privilege of being sought after.

DAMON is ill ; courtiers and citizens come in crowds to see him ; there are not chairs enough in his apartment for them all to sit down. The most elegant young women, old ones of the greatest consideration, and men in place are eager to visit him. His situation is spoken of at every supper : it is known to a moment when he took a basin of broth. Such a man seems dear to all France. Let him not, however, be too proud of it ! Company seek company, and people are sure to find it at his house, and



there learn the news of the day. Damon dies, and the next day nobody hears a word about him.

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OF THE APPROACHES OF DIFFERENT  
CLASSES OF SOCIETY TO EACH OTHER.

THE different societies of the last century were each contained within certain limits; each rank was distinguished by proper characteristics, which, in some persons, were carried to excess. An affectation of the customs which governed each class, or the pretensions of imitating those of another, furnished a great field to the critical observer. The courtier and citizen were different beings by their dress, manners, way of living, and language. The different ages of life were marked by a particular manner of dress; old men, and

and those of a middle age, had different characters to fill in society; their manners, amusements and pleasures were suited to their particular time of life. Every class, by a frequent communication with others, has changed its distinguishing characteristic. The courtier has lost a part of his dignity, the magistrate all his gravity, and the financier his vulgarity; alliances have been multiplied between the nobility, the gown, and finance, and have diminished the distance between the several ranks of subjects. The distinguishing shades of national characters are effaced by communication and habitude. The same thing has happened in society; pleasures, amusements, and a taste for the arts, have united every class; the situation of a man is no longer inquired after, before he is admitted into a circle; the only question goes to know whether or not he be amiable. The multiplication of riches, and the desire of enjoyments, which they produce and favourise, make the intervals of society disappear. Men, continually united by a taste for pleasures,

become more dissipated. Private and domestic life is the fate of persons in obscure situations or totally without fortune. He who has a good stomach, who plays, and knows the news of the day, is of every age and condition. He is neither a magistrate, a financier, the father of a family, nor a husband. He is a man of the world : at his death every body is surprised to hear that he was eighty years of age. Nobody would have supposed it from the life he led. Those with whom he lived, knew not that he was great grandfather, husband, or father. What then was he in their estimation ? He had a quarter of a lodge at the opera, played at lotto, and supped in company.



## OF BON TON AND RIDICULE.

WHAT is called bon ton is essential to men of mediocrity, but a man of superior understanding cannot subject himself to the laws it imposes. It would be necessary to sacrifice his ideas or to weaken them. The dictionary of bon ton is not extensive enough for him. A certain discernment is necessary to discover ridicule, and to express it in an agreeable manner. But he whose wit is very superior, finds nothing ridiculous; he sees nothing particular; and manners, customs, and the oddities of men and nations appear to him to be in the nature of things. What appears extraordinary to others is familiar to a man of this description: his astonishment is at an end. It is upon the same principle that a man is not affected by that which surprises a child or makes him laugh.

Ridicule is invented by frivolous minds. It circumscribes ideas within certain limits, subjects conversation to a certain jargon, and establishes conventions which must be implicitly fulfilled. It is an enemy to candour and simplicity, and exercised upon virtue and merit. The man of genius, he who is endowed with a great talent, may be the victims of ridicule; but the man of wit braves all its shafts. Ridicule permits not men to have their natural elevation; they must neither be above nor below the established degree. It gives an idea of the tyrant in the fable, who measured all his guests upon his bed, and cut off or lengthened the feet of those who were too tall or too short,

If a man becomes the object of public attention by favour, the mode, or a great action, ridicule vanishes. His words, actions, and person, which, in another case, would have been the objects of ridicule, are now those of admiration. It would be the fashion to limp, have a cast in the eyes, or speak vulgarly, if these

these were the defects of a man of celebrity.

The greatest misfortune is the object by preference of ridicule.

Put the king by my side three days, said the cardinal de Retz, and I shall be master of Paris. Raise me to favour may it be said, and the most delicate courtiers will admire the manners and ton which they ridiculed the evening before.

There is but a thin partition between ridicule and the sublime.

When a man is celebrated, people become just by enthusiasm, his ignorance of the conventions of society is then construed into a merit: this appears to be beneath his consideration. Men of mediocrity seem to say, It is proper we should know these things, but this man ought to be ignorant of them.



## OF RICHES.

A MAN of quality formerly placed all his property in land, and endeavoured to increase his estate. Contracts were looked upon as ignoble, but at present men sell their estates to purchase stock of every kind in the funds; and a man of the first rank knows exactly that the loan of thirty-six millions has risen six-eighths, and that another is fallen one and a half; he is connected with stock-brokers, and has his port-folio like a financier; the revolutions upon the exchange engage his attention, and are the subjects of conversation in the politest circles; the young, beautiful and elegant Cordelia speaks of the *gabelle* \*, *corvies* †, and public credit, and has taken

\* An excise in France upon salt; and a place in Paris where salt is sold to the citizens. T.

† The repair of high roads, and the duty certain persons are obliged to do or compound for. T.

a lover

a lover who has written a memoir upon the course of exchange.

The greatest advantage arising from the possession of money, is the power of hastening, in some measure, the progress of time, and of accelerating events. By means of this powerful agent, distances are shortened, and projects speedily executed. Persons who can second our views, are anxious to remove every difficulty. It seems that a rich man can produce every thing with money, as fruits are produced in hot-houses; he multiplies enjoyments, and has the greatest variety of them within his reach. Fatal error! How strangely do men deceive themselves in attaining so speedily their end without the pleasing satisfaction of the agreeable means which lead to it. Would the sportsman, who should drive a thousand partridges into his poultry-yard, have much pleasure in shooting them there? deprived of the emotion of desire, his mind and body would be benumbed, and he would have no opportunity

portunity of exercising his skill, whence arises a great part of his amusement. In this manner it is that fortune treats the rich.

It is related, that one day the master of the gods, fatigued by the complaints of the indigent, who continually repeated, that the rich enjoyed every thing, honours, power and pleasure, felt himself moved and came to their assistance. It is too much, said he to Fortune, that you who bestow sceptres and dignities, should have in your power the disposal of pleasure. Ah, replied the goddess, if I could not procure pleasure, my power would be destroyed, dignities would be an insupportable burden, and honours so many splendid embarrassments. Well, said Jupiter, I leave you pleasure, but as soon as you appear, desires shall be extinguished. The equilibrium, added he, will, by these means, be a little re-established. Fortune thought the master of the gods had that day drank rather too much



much nectar. What! exclaimed she, he thinks to do me an injury, and he increases my power. The instant my favourites feel desires, they will be satisfied. The offerings of incense will be more abundant upon my altars.—  
Experience has proved how blind Fortune was.

## OF AVARICE.

**METALS** are the representations of enjoyments, and must naturally inflame the imagination of man. He therein pleasingly contemplates the instrument of his happiness; upon their surface the imperious man sees engraved the slavery he means to impose; and the haughty discover in them the greatest distinctions. The voluptuous man previously smiles at the beauties which seem to solicit his favour, and he who is ambitious removes in his imagination every obstacle to fame, purchases suffrages, and fills up every interval. The differences which exist in the kind of love men have for riches are established by age and character. A taste for pleasure, or an inclination to voluptuousness, may produce avidity, but not an attachment to money; a desire of satisfying the passions, but not a wish to preserve

preserve it. An inquietude for the future is the reigning sentiment of weak and pusillanimous characters; they are less affected by an enjoyment than by the fear of wants: from this situation of mind comes avarice. In despotic governments, where the excess of power renders every kind of possession precarious, fear acts upon men more forcibly than any other sentiment. In this situation, they are more inclined to avarice than in most others; they wish to be continually insured from want, for which purpose they collect their property into a narrow compass, and hide their gold; according to age, or the strength of the passions, they are desirous of riches, as a powerful vehicle, or a safe port where they may brave all the revolutions of fortune. Passions which acquire their force from that of the soul, inspire the ardor of acquiring treasures for the purpose of distributing them, and the confused idea of power inseparably attached to riches, renders them still more valuable to the man of ambition. It was from this motive that  
Sylla,



Sylla, Pompey, and Cæsar amassed immense treasures; they had recourse to their assistance to place themselves in a situation, which, by nature, they seemed destined to fill.

Youth is the season of lively inclinations, tumultuous desires, and ardent passions, and the period of life when avarice has the least power over the mind. The desire of enjoyments is too strong in youth to be satisfied with their representative signs: this would resemble those blind politicians who make the prosperity of nations consist in the possession of specie. The idea of speedy means is in youth always attached to that of money, and the pressing necessity of making a continued use of it, is inimical to accumulation.

In considering the impatient ardour of the passions in youth, we might be led to suppose that life was to last but for a day; but the precautions of the aged seem to be such as if it were to be eternal. This happens

happens because desire is extreme in youth, and fear, without bounds, in age. For these reasons, strong minds, and youth, which is the age of strength, are eager to enjoy, and unacquainted with avarice. The decline of the sensations, and that of the machine, whence they derive their principle, renders the mind restless and fearful. This is the epocha when avarice gains possession of the hearts of most men. It outlives the passions, establishes its throne upon their ruins, and seems to increase as strength declines. Human life is divided between hope and fear. The heart and mind are successively agitated by their powerful influence. The man far advanced in years is enslaved by fear. He seems to live but in the past, at the epocha of his strength, which has long left him, and in the tender remembrance of the happiness by the loss of which he is afflicted. He seems to lose sight of every thing. The affinity between him and others seems daily to diminish, and his connections with society become less numerous. In this state of solitude he

Y

perceives

perceives his existence to be troublesome to others, and that his heirs impatiently count every moment of it. His languishing days no longer offer that distant perspective to which others are attached by the hopes of a happy change. Life is uninteresting to him. He then becomes sorrowful in the contemplation of his nothingness. Alarmed by his weakness, and irritated by the neglect of others, he seeks a support in his abandoned state, and his fortune offers him a certain resource. His happiness appears to depend upon the preservation and increase of his property. Sad experience has taught an old man the instability of friendship, and convinced him that interest, the only indissoluble bond of attachment, wholly governs mankind. He feels not the restraints he imposes on himself; he knows that the possession only of riches is sufficient to save him from the contempt inseparable from poverty. As fear, the child of weakness, continually torments his imagination, nothing but the presence of his only support can remove it; his fortune  
must



must be ever before his eyes; it must be portable, and his faithful companion wherever he goes. Nothing but his gold can give him chearfulness, and he frequently contemplates it as the object of his tenderest affection. He sees in his fortune both power and independence; the means of corrupting women, which replace those of pleasing them, the comfort of his afflictions, the instrument of his vengeance against ingratitude, and the most powerful attraction offered to respectful cares and attention. These facts prove that the excessive love of riches arises from weakness and the loss of faculties, and is satisfied in the contemplation of that which it is afraid to enjoy.

## OF THE OPULENT MAN.

AT the same time that the possessions of some men have been superior to those of most others, it would have been difficult to have found any body beneath them, either in birth or understanding. There was no place for such persons in society: they formed a class apart, and were by turns despised and flattered.

It is the interest of a man who has no superiority but that of riches, to exaggerate the advantages of the fortune by which he is distinguished. He has no regard for talents, except those which lead to riches; the rest are, in his estimation, but vain amusements of the mind. If Voltaire enjoys any part of his esteem, it is because he found the means of acquiring a great fortune. A farmer-general appears to him one of the strongest pillars of the state; and if he were told of a country  
where

where none of these vultures exist, he would laugh like a king of Pegu, on learning that there was no king at Venice. He is uncouth by the remembrance of his former situation: it is thus that negroes, become masters, are always inhuman.

The rapid passage from the dust of his office to the habitation of a magnificent house, has given him no opportunity of learning the different degrees of politeness, nor the conventions of society; he is either mean or arrogant. His life is divided into two states of languor, the satiety and intoxication of fortune\*.

The poor are continually disposed to forget themselves by the want to which they are slaves; the rich to forget others by the distance at which they are placed from them. Too widely separated from the rest of mankind, kings are the only friends

\* *Go wretch, sleep off thy gold*, said one day a wit to a farmer-general, whose insolence had excited his contempt.



which remain to them. Nothing but money can procure them the favours of love, and the deceitful demonstrations of esteem or friendship. The moment their tables are covered with delicious meats, or their entertainments celebrated, they become intoxicated with the praise as if it were personal. They do themselves justice.— They become, in some measure, confounded with their dishes, and transformed into well tasted partridges, and wine of Tokai.

Mercenaries sell their hands to the rich for a mean but indispensable existence: the man of the world, still more vile, sells his wit and liberty for delicate meats.

Mondor inhabits a palace, and is sometimes secretly ashamed of its magnificence. He contemplates, without pleasure, the master-pieces of art with which the apartments are not ornamented but hung. All he knows of their excellence is by the price they cost him. Men have but little curiosity to be acquainted with his person,

but

but anxiously desire to see his house. He shews it, and seems more the steward than the master. He maims and confounds the names of the painters and sculptors. Every thing is in heaps: the eye knows not where to repose: people think they are in a large warehouse, and return from it fatigued and disgusted with the richness. A man so opulent is not happy. His soul is benumbed by satiety; his senses are fatigued; his mind is without desires, and his vanity disgusted with insipid incense. What will he do with the immense property he possesses? Let him succour the wretched! This he has attempted, but has ceased his charities lest he should encourage vice and idleness. Let him assist an honest man whose affairs are embarrassed! He has lately obliged a man high in power and credit, by lending him, at five per cent. a million of livres to purchase a considerable employment, and has taken a mortgage upon an enormous property. Mondor does not lend to the first comer, he only whose rank is sufficiently elevated to flatter his vanity, and rich enough to offer

offer security beyond the reach of events, can expect his assistance.—The services you render Mondor, the numerous pleasures which present themselves to you, are neither sufficient to animate your life, nor dissipate the languor of satiety. I have reflected upon your situation. You must endeavour to increase your riches, this is the only means you have of employing them, or of interesting your mind.

DORANTE has neither birth nor merit. He has some wit of a malicious turn. Circumstances have introduced him into societies of the first rank, and by degrees he is become connected with the greatest men at court, and the most distinguished citizens. His familiarity is extreme with women of the highest distinction, as well as with princes, people in place, and persons in favour. He is ill-tempered, wavering and hasty; his manners would not become a man of the highest birth. Dorante is afraid of appearing inferior, and has found no other means of avoiding it but by being insolent.

Th



The only difference between an honest man and a knave, frequently consists in a man's deceiving or not deceiving himself.

An honest man feels more embarrassment than a knave in justifying himself; the former never thinks of being suspected, the latter previously prepares for his defence.

Irregularity of most kinds is frequently the effect of weakness and a sick appetite; singular refinements are used to excite it. A passion which can never be completely satisfied, becomes irritated, and grasps at the shadow of pleasure, which continually escapes it. The love of impotence is an unbounded horizon.

Sully and la Bruyere say, that public affairs must not be intrusted to him who has not found the means of making his own fortune. Disinterestedness, and great public concerns may make a man neglect his domestic interests, and still render him  
more

more capable of managing those of government.

With respect to money concerns, the malversations of a statesman may be calculated. The effects of ignorance are beyond all computation.

A great error in those who wish to please and succeed is their endeavouring to give others an opinion of their merit, instead of which they ought to appear convinced of the superiority of the merit of those whom they solicit, as their surest means of success.

**OF A MAN WHO HAS MADE A FORTUNE  
BY KNOWING HOW TO APPEAR AT EASE  
UNDER THE IMPRESSION OF WEARINESS  
AND LANGUOR.**

**CHRYSANTE** enjoys an immense income. He has had considerable concerns in different affairs, and has pensions, governorships and dignities; all these have come by degrees without exciting envy. People are surpris'd at his fortune. Chrysante is not known to the public by any great action; he is neither the son nor nephew of a minister or a mistress, nor has he ever been in favour with the sovereign; he is scarcely known to him. What has Chrysante done? He has fatigued himself during thirty years, and passed nights which young men consecrate to



to pleasure, in listening to the stories of a maid of honour of the last century, who had still some credit, and whose recitals had always an air of novelty to him. He has played cavagnoles\* without number. The hours he has lounged away in different anti-chambers would make several years. He has been a confident in the amours of four or five persons in power; has hearkened, without shewing the least signs of impatience, to fastidious proprietors, who have each given a hundred times a description of the elegance of their houses, and has gone as many times with an appearance of pleasure to see these edifices. Chrysante has for several years patiently listened to Dorimont, whilst he gave a pompous account of his genealogy and alliances, and has assisted a dozen times at the reading of the works of Alcidon without falling a sleep. These are his services: they are numerous and varied. He has

\* A game introduced in France in the reign of Louis XIV. T.

never

never been in the trenches, but what merit is there in being exposed to danger? That of risking one's life : Chryfante sacrifices his by piece-meal. The minister and magistrate who renounce all pleasures, and pass a laborious life in the closet, are objects of admiration. Chryfante also has abandoned pleasure, and passed a part of his life still more disagreeably. It was necessary he should have another kind of merit. The magistrate and minister may publish the result of their application, but Chryfante, in the midst of the most fatiguing occupations, had a serene countenance and the appearance of being at ease.

There are people who are satisfied with the appearances of favour, without reaping from it any advantage. Their happiness consists in having free access to a minister or a great man, in living with him upon friendly terms, and in being initiated to secrets without having any interest in them. They are  
the

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the furniture of men in place, which their successors inherit. Their intimacy is continued by their having neither will nor sentiment, and by not asking favours, either for themselves or others. Vanity is the reigning passion of men of this description.



**CHARACTER OF THE VAIN AND PERSONAL  
MAN.**

CHRYISIS has politeness of manners, flexibility of character, and gentleness of temper. There is nothing to which he is particularly attached, and if he shews an air of concern, it is certainly for a person connected with people in favour. He makes one in every circle, and holds to that which takes the lead. He is provided with some stories which he gracefully relates. He never dissents from what is said by others, and his attention to them is always accompanied by an obliging smile. He never breaks with any body, and when a man in place begins to lose his credit, Chrysis insensibly withdraws himself, and it always happens that he has some subject of complaint against a minister

minister in disgrace. He is looked upon in society as a safe man. Passiveness is no uneasy virtue for a man who cannot be affected. His morals are neither good nor bad, they are those of the age in which he lives, and of the society most distinguished. He is the friend of every man in place, and takes care never to ask for any thing, or to solicit but coldly. Ask him not for his interest : he guesses your wants, and his coolness announces that he foresees your intention. Chrysis has for forty years been cordially received by the great, by ministers, and men in place ; they are certain of never being importuned by his solicitations. He dines with the minister who is disgraced, in the evening he sups with his successor. He seems to be of every family, and cannot accept half the invitations he receives. Such a manner of life is so flattering to him that nothing can engage him to interrupt the course of it. All his credit is useless to his relations and friends. The man of merit, the unfortunate and  
persecuted

persecuted have no claim to his assistance. A word would be sufficient to make his friend happy; he will not pronounce it. Could the least effort prevent the greatest act of injustice, Chrysis would not make it. He will never run the risk of embarrassing a man in place least his future reception should be less cordial.



## OF THE ADVANTAGES OF MEDIOCRITY.

EVERY kind of mediocrity ultimately procures success. The man of wit knows, within a trifle, the extent of his limits, he compares himself with others, and consequently is not always satisfied with the result. The fool is too frequently advertised of his incapacity not to feel himself humiliated. The man of mediocrity is the happiest of mortals, whether his contemplations be interiorly or exteriorly directed; he is never led away by imagination, and takes a pride in being exempt from its wanderings. He has a secret pleasure in speaking of the faults and errors of men of wit. He mistakes frigidity of mind and slowness of decision for judgment, wisdom or reason. He is a pilot in a little bark, who never quits the coast, and is more employed in

in counting the shipwrecks of vessels out at sea, than the successes of those which arrive safe in port!

#### CHARACTER OF A MAN OF MEDIOCRITY.

THERE is nothing remarkable in the person of Adraustes. He does not excel, but he is never lost sight of. He is considered at court, and well received in the city. It is he who is consulted upon a marriage, an affair, and upon the conduct to be observed on a delicate occasion; his circumspection prevents him from solving difficulties, but never makes him an enemy. He is not one of those men early announced as persons who seem destined to fill the highest offices of state, nor on whom public attention is

fixed. Adraftes is always spoken of as a man who will certainly come to an higher employment than that which he now holds: and, placed at an equal distance between Envy and Contempt, he is uninterruptedly making his way to the preferment he has in view. Shall I say Adraftes has wit? This is impossible.—That he is wholly devoid of it? That would be injustice. He has never made himself thoroughly master of any thing; he had not the means of doing it; but he has much superficial knowledge, and is particularly fond of detail. He has a fund sufficient to join for a moment in the conversation of every circle; he is a *serinette* upon which there are set a few airs. What he says is accommodated to the general run of ideas; his probity is exact and scrupulous, and there is something cool and deliberate in all his proceedings. His expressions are never indiscreet, nor his conduct irregular; every part of his behaviour is so natural, that it costs him no effort, and he knows not what it is to



to repress the sudden emotions of the soul, nor the vivacity of the mind.—

Adraſtes, you are yet but in the middle of your career;—live, and a conſiderable fortune awaits you; and who knows but a happy and unexpected event may give of you the idea of a great man; you excel, Adraſtes, in your way, you are a man of great capacity in the eyes of fools, and the firſt among men of mediocrity.

OF MAN'S INCLINATION TO ADMIRE  
EVERY KIND OF POWER.

THE imagination is prejudiced in favour of power of every kind, and those who expect no advantages from it are allured by its charms. The most virtuous women despise the impotent. The most generous and humane master insensibly sees his servants, seduced by the attraction of youth, which presents the image of power, give the preference to his son.

The age of the passions, and of talents, is the epocha of every kind of success. None but persons of this time of life can inspire enthusiasm and excite a tender concern. Men must die young, like Alexander and Germanicus, to make their remembrance

membrance dear, and leave behind them great names. When we think of Mithridates with a long beard, we coldly assent to his talents and courage.

Men are agreeably contemplated in the fullness of their strength, and in the moment of the energy of the passions. The ideas of degradation and weakness diminish admiration. A fine woman, cut off in the flower of her age, leaves to posterity an idea of the charms for which she was celebrated. Ninon, who was beautiful, and lived to a decrepit old age, presents the image of a sensible and philosophic woman, but madame de Montbazon recalls nothing but the idea of beauty.

There is an age for every one to die at.

The miser deprives himself of necessities ; he is known to be cruel and unfeeling, and incapable of rendering the most trifling service. He permits him-



self no enjoyment of which others can partake. It seems therefore as if nothing ought to gain him the least attention. This man is nevertheless considered, and is of more consequence in a circle than an honest man without fortune. People respect in him a power of which he makes no use, and the certainty of his having no favour to ask is another motive for treating him well.

## OF GOODNESS AND PROBITY.

**GOODNESS** and simplicity are frequently confounded. Goodness is a quality of the heart, and simplicity consists in a facility of manners which renders them agreeable to others; they may nevertheless be allied to every vice, and have no relation with virtue.

**Probity**, in an interested point of view, is ultimately that which is the most safe and advantageous. Many knavish tricks proceed from errors in calculation.

It seldom happens that there is a necessity of deciding between a good action, and a present, considerable, and certain advantage.

## OF CONFIDENCE IN PHYSICIANS.

SOME people say, they have confidence in Strabon the physician. What can be the meaning of these words? They who speak in this manner know nothing of the medical art, are no judges of professional knowledge, nor of the talents necessary to reduce it to practice, and are frequently incapable of appreciating either wit or learning.

If medicine be an useful art, and there be physicians superior to others, it ought to be remarked, that in the country, and in some cities even, fewer people die than in the capital, and at certain epochs when there are celebrated physicians.

A man who puts his whole confidence in a physician of great reputation is much



much to be pitied. When he is ill, perhaps some circumstance will prevent his having his assistance. If he travels, he will certainly be deprived of it: if he be in the country, he cannot have it in time.

Medicine, as well as the most trifling objects, is under the influence of fashion. For ten years it is the fashion to prescribe bleeding in an illness; another method is afterwards adopted. Sometimes warm injections are the mode, at others cold ones. *Sylva said, Small-pox, I will accustom thee to bleeding.*

In medicine there is a certain established method to which all those of the profession attach themselves. Perhaps in two or three cases a man of great genius makes a profound combination which saves a patient who would have perished under any other physician. But who will point out to me this man of superior abilities? What means have I, who am ignorant of

of his art, of forming a judgment of them?

Whether physicians be more or less numerous, able, or ignorant, I learn from the funeral registers, that mortality, among men, is in the proportion of about three to a hundred.

Men of the world, and women, think their notary and advocate the first of all notaries and advocates. Nothing is more easy than to deceive in a matter absolutely unknown to those before whom it is treated of. The common place expressions of every profession become, in the opinion of the ignorant, so many sublime sentences. Add to this a situation wherein they are highly concerned, as in an illness, for example, and it will be perceived how easy it is for a physician to acquire a great reputation, if he be a man of parts, and has a facility of expression.

**OF THE SUPERIORITY OF THE ANCIENTS  
OVER THE MODERNS.**

THE question of the superiority of the ancients over the moderns was, at the end of the last century and the beginning of the present, very warmly debated, but in the publications upon this subject it appears not to have been considered in a true point of view.

The principal adversary of the ancients, Penault, was a man of superficial understanding, and without erudition. La Mothe had much wit, but had neither energy nor sentiment, and was unacquainted with antiquity. All their efforts went to decry Homer, whom they did not understand. Madame Dacier, learned in the manner of the fifteenth century, and without taste or discernment, was a fanatic in favour of the



the great poet, and extolled, with a dull enthusiasm, the most simple passages of his work.

Boileau was the only man in France, who, in this dispute, gave proofs of taste and learning, and, in many respects, he decided in favour of the moderns. In tragedy, says he, we are superior to the Latins. In lyric poetry he agrees to an equality, and since Boileau wrote, Rousseau has added to our poetical riches of this kind. Boileau confesses that the age of Louis the Fourteenth was superior in comic poetry to that of Augustus, posterior to the time of Terence. Finally, he observes, that novels, in which there are some beauties, were unknown to the ancients. He would have spoken still more favourably of this kind of production, had he read *Candide*, *Zadig*, *Clarissa*, *Tom Jones*, and *la Nouvelle-Héloïse*. In the time of Boileau there were but few novels really interesting; the princess of Cleves and *Zaïde* were the most esteemed. These works contain nothing but a recital of amorous adventures

tures delicately expressed. But there are several modern novels in which sentiment, philosophy, and a description of the manners of different classes of men are united.

The true manner of discussing the question of the superiority of the ancients over the moderns would have been,

To examine attentively the mechanism of the Greek and Roman languages; to consider whether or not they were more favourable to poetry and eloquence, or contained a greater variety of expression; whether or not they had more harmony and liveliness than the modern languages.

To compare ancient with modern authors, and the difficulties of the works in which their abilities were exercised.

To determine the influence of government and that of climate.

To

To compare the great men of every kind.

In following this method with impartiality, a certain result would have been obtained. Some of these rules were observed, but without order or profound meditation.

La Mothe, who was neither a poet nor an orator, nor had the least knowledge of the Greek, maintained that the French language rendered every idea; it is true he had no need of any other, because it was sufficient to express what his clear and methodical mind conceived. Dumarfais would have spoken of ancient and modern languages in a more enlightened manner, and have compared them more justly.

At the time of these disputes, the moderns were not so rich as they now are, and the balance must naturally have inclined to the side of the ancients: but the men of superior genius, who, within the  
last



last half century have appeared in Europe, and more particularly in France, render the party more equal. The question was not ripe for discussion in the time of Boileau and de la Mothe. The moderns then appeared like backward children.

No modern author is equal to Homer or Virgil in epic poetry; notwithstanding the beauty of the verses, and the rich descriptions in the *Henriade*, it must be acknowledged that it is wholly uninteresting. We are forced to decide in favour of the ancient poets of this kind; but may not the tragedies of Corneille, Racine, Voltaire and Crebillon be opposed to two poems? Sophocles and Euripides, for I will not speak of the tragic declamations of Seneca, have served as models to modern authors: Racine is much indebted to them. But has not he surpassed his masters? The great effects which the representation of the Greek tragedies produced, seem to be in favour of the ancients, and

to give them the pre-eminence. But to judge by effects of the merit of the pieces, it would be necessary to establish the difference produced by the sensibility of the audience. This was extreme in the Grecians, and the art of the actors, the harmony of the language, added to interesting events, must have greatly contributed to the success of the composition.

The modern Pliny, by his sagacity, the extent of his genius, and his majestic style, is certainly superior to the Pliny of the ancients.

Our comedies are superior to those of Plautus and Terence; these are frequently cold, and have but little variety of intrigue. What ancient author can be compared to Moliere, or even to Regnard: the French theatre has, since their time, been enriched by a great number of pieces, upon which continued success has stamped the impression of high merit.

By

By the choice of a happy subject, that which is most poignant in real comedy, is joined in the *Metromanie* \* to all the pomp of poetry.

L'Art Poétique of Boileau, his Epistles, and those of Voltaire, may be advantageously compared with the epistles of Horace, and his Art of Poetry. The fine Odes of Rousseau are not inferior in harmony to those of Pindar and Horace, and the fugitive pieces of Voltaire have no model in antiquity.

Rivals are not so easily found for ancient orators and historians, and there are several reasons for their superiority over the moderns. The form of government, which opened to the eloquent man a road to the highest honours, the importance of the subject of debate, and the energy of republican minds point out the reason why eloquence could not fail to

\* A comedy by Piron. T.



make such great progress among the ancients \*.

The whole body of the people, understanding their interests, affected by harmony, and habituated to emotions, hearkened attentively to their orators, and their suffrages were not confined to vain marks of applause. Honours, dignities and commands were decreed to those who had made themselves masters of the passions. What torrents of eloquence must have fallen from men of talents animated by such powerful motives ! The hope or fear excited by the gestures and movements of

\* Some funeral orations of Bossuet and Flechier, and a few sermons of Bourdaloue, might be compared with the finest orations of the ancients. But we speak of the art of eloquence, which was the operating and decisive principle of every deliberation, which led away the multitude, and opened the road to honours; of that art of speaking which is peculiar to republics. There was certainly a greater number of eloquent men, and the study of every thing which could increase the illusion of words was the object of general application.

an agitated multitude, pressed on every side both the mind and soul, and elevated them to the highest degree of power and expression.

The ancient languages have, by means of long and short syllables and accents, a particular harmony. Inversions give more liveliness to prose and verse, and break the uniformity of methodical style. Narrative, conversation, declamation, harangues, all were musical with the ancients : the laws even were noted among the Greeks : the public crier was subjected to a declamation, which was a kind of singing \*. It is not the ancient authors only which we are to compare, the Greek and Roman people must be opposed to those of modern times. The minds of the Greeks and Romans were susceptible of the most rapid succession of the liveliest impressions. Their taste and judgment

\* CAIUS GRACCHUS was accompanied, when he harangued, by a man with a pitch-pipe, who gave him the tone.

were continually exercised and improved by the contemplation of master pieces of art of every kind. The multitude was ardent, and always agitated by some great interest. The habitude of seeing their suffrages solicited inspired the people with a noble pride. The meanest citizens who fell in war were honoured with public funeral rites ; perfumes were thrown upon their funeral piles, and the most illustrious personages pronounced an oration celebrating their courage and virtues.

Instead of a delicate and sensible people, and proud of its power, we have a populace vulgar and ignorant, and many persons, superior by their fortune and profession, deserve not by their taste and learning to be distinguished from the lowest classes. Among the ancients there was no interval between a celebrated artist and men of the highest rank. Every thing which excited emotions in the soul, had powerful pretensions with persons of sensible, delicate and energetic minds. Youth  
were



were eager to hear philosophers, and the allurements of these were as strong as those of Phryne or Lais.

The republican spirit was equally favourable to history. Truth was spoken with greater boldness.—Tacitus thus expresses himself upon the subject — “ Illustrious writers,” says he, “ have related remarkable events of the first ages of Rome, and of the reign of Augustus; but there came a time when the necessity of flattering disgusted men with historical writing.” If boldness of thought and rapidity of style give the first rank to ancient historians, it must also be allowed, that they had more interesting subjects to exercise their talents upon than those which modern history present. The ancient annals of France, England, the Germanic empire, and of the people of the north, cannot be read without disgust. Every thing in them is barbarous, the names even of their heroes are more dissonant than those of the Iroquois. It requires no inconsiderable courage to search the ruins of

antiquity wherein some of the ancient monuments of our constitutions lie buried. Charters, abbey registers, the vestiges of ridiculous and contradictory customs and confused laws must be carefully examined. Let the *Cours plénieres* of our kings be compared to the feasts and games of the ancients. How stupid was the magnificence on those days of pomp, when our monarchs were served on horseback ! Instead of that simplicity, which some take pleasure in attributing to our ancient language, vulgarity, inseparable from barbarity, is its real characteristic.

There are few historians among the moderns which can be compared to Thucydides, Xenophon, Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus. Hume and Robertson appear to approach them the nearest. They, perhaps, would have overtaken them, had they written in their language, and had had as interesting events to relate. Tacitus would not have risen to the elevation which characterize his thoughts, had he not written in an age wherein a remembrance

brance of the defenders of an expiring republic was still preserved, and when the effervescence given to the mind by a long exercise of liberty, impetuously carried it to the seat of crimes and excessive authority. None but minds habituated to extreme sensations could carry vices to excess, as I will take the liberty to say, virtue itself had also been.

The ancients are again very superior in the arts. In Grecian statues there is a justness and nobleness which the moderns find difficult to attain. Grecian forms still serve as models for fine proportions, and the finest plans of architecture are imitated from ancient monuments.

I am of opinion, that the cause of this kind of superiority in the ancients may be found in their organization and climate. The air is more pure and elastic in Greece, and the eye there reaches farther than with us. The organization of the Grecians was finer, their imagination more lively, and their



their mind more susceptible of different impressions than ours. They had consequently a more just idea of what was excellent. The influence of climate was anciently known ; the condense air of Bœotia was remarked and opposed to that of Attica which was clear and piercing.

These reasons are, perhaps, inapplicable to painting, as it appears that the most celebrated painters were ignorant of the laws of perspective. In every thing else belonging to the art they surpassed cotemporary nations, and still surpass the moderns in the elegance of figure, in delicacy, drawing, and composition.

The nature of government joined its influence to that of climate, in the progress of the arts as well as in the perfection of every object which interests the mind. Liberty inspires men with noble ideas of themselves : in countries where the career of honour is open to every citizen, where celebrity and superiority of every kind lead to the most elevated rank, the soaring of  
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the mind must necessarily be more animated. Men there enjoy such a security of person as permits them to give their whole application to one object.

In republican countries every one is subject to the judgment of the multitude, and its real, impetuous, and noisy applause fills the soul with enthusiasm, and rouses every faculty.

The same emulation may exist in monarchical countries, but the monarch must be animated by a strong admiration of talents and the arts, and stimulated by the love of glory. Augustus, Leo X. and Louis XIV. gave lustre to the ages in which they lived, and their propitious influence multiplied about them masterpieces of art of every kind. Augustus conversed with Virgil and Horace; the palace of Leo was open to the learned. Louis XIV. looking at his watch, said one day to Boileau—*Remember that I have always one hour in the week to give you.* By means of such encouragement, more efficacious

cacious than presents, the soaring of genius is excited in monarchies. The prince is almost omnipotent there; he has in some measure the power of creating; but he must have sentiment and volition. In republics every thing is derived from the constitution.

I have run rapidly over the different arts in which the ancients excelled. The result is, that in poetry, if the epic poem be excepted, they have their equals, and that there are kinds of poetry in which the moderns have excelled them; that the ancients have the advantage in orators, historians, and the fine arts, painting excepted, in which the pre-eminence may be given to the moderns; that they were superior to us in dancing and declamation; that there are talents of which our coarser organs prevent us from forming an idea, as in that part of music called hypocritical, which consisted in imitation, and regulated the gestures proper for every situation. The art of gesticulation was of the greatest importance among the ancients.

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They knew how to multiply the expressions of sentiments, and render all their colourings and degrees perceptible. Every thing was harmony, and the Grecians called an unnatural or a false gesture a solecism of the hand. Harmony was not confined to the few, all the people were susceptible of every kind of it; they were fond to excess of theatrical amusements, and their minds were open to the most delicate impressions.

Such was their superiority of every kind, that Rubens thought frequent exercise gave to their bodies a more perfect conformation, which presented to artists the finest models, and gave great advantages to their productions. They had more lively pleasures than we have, and more sensations, because they had more sensibility. The fine ages of Greece seem to present human nature in its vigour, like the spring of life, wherein every thing is emotion and pleasure. When the blood is frozen with age, it is difficult to conceive the emotions, fire, and pleasures of youth; such;

such, perhaps, is the state of the moderns. Our utmost imagination is scarcely sufficient to form an idea of the extreme sensibility of the ancients respecting the arts, or of the sensations they felt, and which they had in some measure created.

Slavery even was a source of talents. Slaves were instructed in philosophy and the arts. Humane masters looked upon them as children of their family, and reaped the fruit of the education they gave them. Others made them objects of speculation, and sold, at a considerable price, those who possessed distinguished talents\*.

It must moreover be observed in favour of the ancients that they more quickly obtained the perfection of talents. We have been seventeen centuries, with all the aids they left us, in forming our lan-

\* In one of Cicero's orations it appears, that a slave was estimated at upwards of 60,000 livres of our money.—Upwards of 2,600 l. sterling. T.

guage, and in approaching their excellence. They carried talents to the utmost limits in six or seven hundred years, calculating from fabulous times and the foundation of Rome. The first soarings of the ancients were rapid. Homer flourished in the earliest age of Greece, and the epocha of the foundation of the republic of Athens is that of the seven sages. The Gauls, in the times of the first kings of Rome, were as far advanced in civilisation as the Romans, and it has not been until after the lapse of twenty centuries that they have, in some things, raised themselves to nearly the same degree of elevation. Whence comes this inequality, if it be not from the difference of climate and institutions ?

The governments of the different countries of Greece were instituted by enlightened men. Most of our modern governments have, on the contrary, barbarians for their founders. Among the ancients there were more men of learning and eloquence, as in the present age we see in

Geneva



Geneva a greater number of well informed persons than in cities much more considerable.

It is also to be presumed, that the ancients had the advantage over us in agreeable, brilliant, and amiable qualities. They were more susceptible, animated and delicate. Cicero says, The Athenians could hear nothing that was not clear and elegant. The faculties of the mind were, among the Greeks and Romans, objects of pretension, and the ambition of young men was to speak in public.

Amiable persons, more animated and susceptible, and whose minds were enriched with general knowledge, must have been very superior to the *agreeable* men of our time: it must also be allowed, that an ancient coxcomb was more eminently ridiculous than one of the present age, however we may be inclined in this respect to do justice to the moderns. Most of our young men resemble wines which are tart when new, and when old insipid. Some  
young

young persons are seducing by their agreeable manners: but have not we the idea of an Alcibiades, in whom all the brilliant advantages of nature are conspicuous, governing the people of Athens, seduced by his wit and gracefulness, engaging them by his eloquence to resolve upon war, chosen by his talents to conduct it, deciding upon peace, and presiding at treaties, conciliating to himself the affection of Socrates and Pericles, and reigning over women by the charms of his mind and person?

Let the life of a young man of the present age be compared with that of an Athenian. The latter heard the interests of his country discussed, gave his advice upon peace and war, and captivated the people by his eloquence. He elevated himself with Socrates and Plato to the highest sphere of reason, and afterwards went to hear, under magnificent porticoes, the finest verses recited in the most expressive and harmonious manner—the finest monuments and master-pieces of painting

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and sculpture were continually before his eyes; the statues of his father, brother, and friend, inflamed his soul; he gave entertainments to an amiable and enlightened people, went to the Olympic games and disputed the prize with his most eminent fellow citizens, with whole cities and with soveraigns.

Another comparifon not lefs striking, and as much in favour of the ancients, presents itself to the mind: that of statemen, generals, and men of virtue. Were I to undertake to prove by facts the fuperiority of the ancients in the high employments of human faculties, I fhould be under the neceffity of giving an abridgment of the Greek and Roman histories. I will content myfelf with affigning the motives which determined men of antiquity, and thofe by which the moderns are principally governed. The nature of effects may be prefumed from the ftrength or weaknefs of the impulfive motive. In the governments of Greece and Rome every citizen was equally called to great employ-



employments; valour, eloquence, an enthusiastic love for the public weal, a superiority of mind, and an energetic soul, opened the way to honours. The consequence was, that general emulation was strongly excited, and that a greater number of persons made trial of their abilities. The people being the supreme judges of talents, qualities and conduct, the mind was not contracted by the necessity of humiliating condescensions. I agree it was necessary to please the people; but this was to be done by eloquence and great actions. Solicitations were used, but these even required to be accompanied by a great extent of understanding, brilliant qualities, generosity, popularity, and a knowledge of the different inclinations of men. How great is the difference between these circumstances and the intrigue in the anti-chamber of a protector, which requires no other knowledge than that of his weaknesses!—between that flexibility of character which suffered men to humour the caprices of an ardent, inconstant, sensible, delicate, and vehement

people, and that which permits the moderns to brave the rebuffs of a porter, and the disdain of a valet de chambre, to get to a closet where they find a man absent and embarrassed with the most trifling discussion, who, from time to time, utters with emphasis a few common place expressions, in a few moments after indicates the door by his eye and gesture, and refers them to a subaltern whose mediocrity they must caress, as well as bear with his importance.

The ancients derive more particular pre-eminence from the various talents of their great men : They were generals, politicians, orators, and men of letters. There are among the moderns great statesmen and great generals ; but for the most part they have but one kind of talent. There are others of renown who are as great strangers to taste, talents, wit, and the arts, as the caliph who ordered the library of Constantinople to be burned. At present, every one is confined to the exercise of the duties of his employment, and seems  
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to hold every thing foreign to them in the highest contempt. A judge, who has studied the law and knows the rules prescribed, looks upon letters as frivolous. The public even, losing the remembrance of de l'Hopital, Harley, and Lamoignon, is disposed to conclude unfavourably to the merit of a magistrate who has a taste for letters; every thing which comes not within the duties of an employment generally appears to be folly and dissipation to the narrow ideas of most moderns; it seems as if they were incapable of two kinds of merit. Let not what was said at the time *l'Esprit des Loix* appeared be forgotten, *Que ce n'étoit que de l'Esprit sur les Loix*—that it was wit only upon the laws.

I will not enlarge upon the virtue of the ancients. Liberty is the greatest incentive to sublime actions, and accompanied with every generous sentiment, added to greatness of thought. When men love virtue their admiration of ancient republics seem continually to in-



crease. It is the golden age which they pleasingly contemplate in imagination.

I have not spoken of natural or moral philosophers, nor of physicians. With respect to these, much depends upon observation and experience. I am satisfied with having remarked, that the ancients became more speedily enlightened than the moderns, and that they flew in the career wherein others have crawled along. They were far advanced in policy and morals. We have surpassed them in these, but our superiority can be attributed to nothing but the lapse of time, and the progression of accumulated knowledge. Antiquity was like a sublime and premature genius extinguished in the middle of its career. It must not be imputed to its disadvantage, that it had not time to conceive and execute; from the rapid progress of the ancients, every thing ought to be presumed in their favour. If a tortoise went in one day over a space of ground in the middle of which a stag had perished, ought

ought I to do honour to the tortoise because he had reached the limits? I think we ought to believe that antiquity would earlier have produced a Bacon, a Newton, a Montesquieu, and a Buffon; but these superior luminaries do not, on account of their later appearance in modern times, make the balance incline less in our favour either in extent or elevation of genius. If the ancients were superior in talents and sentiment, they owed these advantages to their language, climate, and government. It is not the wit or talents of the moderns that I oppose to the ancients. Had Voltaire been born in Greece or Rome, he would have been superior to what he was. The ancients were nationally and individually more susceptible and enlightened than we are. This is principally what I have endeavoured to prove.

I have shewn what elevated and animated the ancients, and will endeavour to point out the causes of degeneration

in the moderns. Great talents are useless in the way to high preferment. The swiftness of a vigorous courser was necessary in the Olympic games, but the slow and sure steps of the mule are best suited to the uneven road of fortune, and the slippery paths of courts. When a government is firmly established, and interiorly calm and solid, easy impulsions give to every thing an equal movement, nothing more than the continuation of established order is necessary, and to this effect prudence is sufficient. We read in Thucidides, that great genius was unnecessary in government, and this truth is applicable to various circumstances. As in mechanics, the invention of simple machines has considerably diminished the number of hands formerly employed, so men of genius become, by the adoption of rules and forms, less necessary in governments. But before they are judged useless, we must be assured that the plan of administration be as perfect as possible. If the political organization be vicious,  
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vices will be multiplied by a stubborn adherence to forms adopted without sufficient deliberation.

The difference of rewards is an obstacle to the efforts of the mind. Would the sublime geniusses of which antiquity only gives us examples, as it offers us monuments astonishing to the imagination; would these celebrated men have had in our time the same elevation? The principles of ambition not being the same, the efforts of genius would be considerably more weak. Let us compare the honours of triumph, the elevation of statues, and the institution of public feasts with the distinction of a ribbon; the spoils of the richest nations, with a pension; the acclamations of the multitude, with the inanimate eulogium of a man in place. Effects, as I have observed, may be easily judged of by motives. The excellence of monarchical government consists in doing every thing at the least possible expence, and in rendering

dering great men unnecessary. This kind of government resembles a calm sea, without shoals or rocks, where able pilots are not so requisite as in a sea more agitated. It is in republics, that great men rise up and display their abilities. They are like lightening which breaks forth in the midst of a storm. Shall we regret the time of the league, because it presents several men of superior talents? Le Balafre and l'Amiral de Coligny cannot exist in a well governed state. The intrepid Molé would, in our days, be no more than an upright magistrate; he would not have displayed his courage and virtues. The cardinal de Retz an intriguer or an obscure debauchée.

If great talents be useless, except in critical times, it is evident that men of superior minds will never desire to obtain high employments; and if some accidental circumstance, or the judgment of the prince should call them to administration, they could not maintain their  
situation

situation without much pain to their feelings. A man of an enlightened mind sees in an instant what he alone can conceive and execute, and if he be obliged to renounce it, and reduced to do that which is within the reach of the most moderate talents, he becomes quickly disgusted. It might also happen, that having but little knowledge of trifling forms, and neglecting the petty details in which men of mediocrity take pleasure, he would be judged so much the more incapable as his genius was more elevated. Such men will always be more disposed to enlighten the age than to employ their time in functions considerable by their object, but to which common faculties are sufficient. Montesquieu, it is said, refused a great place as a vigorous gladiator would have disdained to descend to the arena with a feeble adversary. Europe ought to be obliged to him for having preferred the honour of instructing to the momentary pomp of a place, which any other person might fill. What employment



ployment was worthy of exercising his genius, or would have given him an opportunity of manifesting that depth of penetration which extended to the most hidden causes ; that extent of understanding which embraced the most distant relations, and that talent of rendering the sublimest conceptions in the most lively, concise, and brilliant manner ? There are generally, in modern governments, many men of business, and capable of judging, but statesmen and men of genius fit to become legislators are very few in number.

Tacitus, in speaking of men called to government employments, takes care to say, *He was neither superior nor unequal to public affairs.* The result is, that there is a degree of talents very superior to public business, properly so called. “ There are men of wit, says Swift, who are commonly looked upon as incapable of business, and who are really above it. A fiery and generous steed may carry a pack-saddle, but he is too good to be put to this employ.”

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The difference of rewards, the nature of government, the intrigue of courts, and the narrow sphere of affairs are in general the causes which render great men of every kind more rare among the moderns. Wit and genius are sometimes disadvantageous to those who possess them. They inspire tormenting inclinations and restless desires, because men have not an opportunity of acquiring the fame to which they aspire. The mind ineffectually agitated is amused with vain glory, of which, at every moment, it perceives the insufficiency.

The gift which particularly distinguishes man from beasts, and by which he subjugates his fellow citizens, the gift of speech has not the least influence in the greater part of modern governments. The field for talents is circumscribed in some places. None but sacred orators and advocates general are permitted to display the riches of their eloquence. The domination of little societies also contribute  
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to weaken the mind. They keep every one at a distance who announces a decided character, and are prodigal in their praises of men of mediocrity, whose advancement they facilitate. A list of persons preferred to great employments, by reason of their modest talents, would be numerous.

THE END.

